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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE FAITHFUL ASSISTANT: THE KOMSOMOL IN THE SOVIET MILITARY AND ECONOMY, 1918-1932

BY

© ANDREW JURICIC

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS.

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Edmonton, Alberta
FALL 1994

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE FAITHFUL ASSISTANT: THE KOMSOMOL IN THE SOVIET MILITARY AND ECONOMY, 1918-1932 submitted by ANDREW JURICIC in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS.

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> Here is the task which stands before every conscious communist, before every young person who considers himself a communist and is clearly aware that he, entering into the Communist Youth League, takes upon himself the task of helping the Party build communism and helping the entire young generation create a communist society.
>
> - V.I. Lenin at the Third Komsomol Congress, October 2 1920[1]

Introduction

To consolidate their control over the ruins of the Russian state following their success in the 1917 October Revolution, Lenin and his Bolshevik Party found it essential to enlist the support of the country's youths. The formation of the All-Union Leninist Communist Youth League (Komsomol) was the vehicle through which the Party would accomplish this task. Tightly controlled by Party functionaries, Komsomol members (Komsomolites) were politically and socially indoctrinated to become loyal members of the Soviet state as well as stalwart supporters and future members of the Bolshevik Communist Party. Having begun with a membership of only several thousand, by the late 1970s the Komsomol had over 35 million Soviet youths enrolled in its ranks. With the recruitment of members continually reaching these figures, the Party would ensure both its

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[1]V.K. Ignat'eva, Bor'ba KPSS za sotsialisticheskuiu industrializatsiiu strany i podgotovku sploshnoi kollektivizatsii sel'skogo khoziaistva 1926-1929 gody; dokumenty i materialy (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1960),52.

rejuvenation and its supremacy in society for years to come.

Western works on the Komsomol have been both sporadic in their appearance and general in their nature, concentrating on its organizational framework, indoctrination techniques used on its members, and Communist Party control over the organization. In spite of the apparent scholarly interest in the Youth League, the voluminous amount of primary material and the preoccupation by Western scholars with the Communist Party have limited the analysis of the Komsomol to these three essential characteristics. As a result, the Komsomol is still grossly under-analyzed by Western specialists.

A twenty-two page article by Merle Fainsod, entitled "The Komsomols - A Study of Youth under Dictatorship", in the 1951 edition of The American Political Science Review is probably the first authoritative Western study of the Komsomol.[2] After editing and slightly expanding the article, Fainsod incorporated it into his book How Russia is Ruled. In his chapter on the Komsomol Fainsod outlines the formation of the organization, its administrative framework, and the training and activities demanded of Komsomol members. While the information he presents is, on the whole, quite general, it is still very significant, especially for an initial work on the topic.

Fainsod's examination of the Komsomol also exposes the stereo-

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[2]Klaus Mehnert's ground-breaking work entitled Youth in Soviet Russia (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1933) will not be discussed because its early publication and the absence of documentation limited its significance.

types of Komsomol members which were fabricated by the Soviet propaganda machine. The image of the well-disciplined and obedient Komsomolite propagated by Party organs is questioned by Fainsod who surmises a deep dissatisfaction among Komsomol members. The children of parents who have been persecuted by the Soviet regime, peasant youths, youths repatriated from Germany and Austria at the end of the war and those who participated in the Red Army during its drive across Eastern and Central Europe, and individually rebellious youths are all listed by Fainsod as those who would be difficult to indoctrinate.[3] The extensive number of youths which this list would embrace leads Fainsod to claim that the model of a devoted Komsomol member is exaggerated.

Fainsod also challenges the opposite belief, usually held by ultra-conservative elements in the West, that all Komsomol members display signs of disaffection towards the Soviet regime. According to information obtained from the Soviet press and from interviews with Soviet émigrés and former Komsomol members residing in the West, Fainsod concludes that there exists "a firm nucleus of Komsomol activists who are genuine ideological converts"[4], and whose fanaticism grows stronger with age. He further states that surrounding and supporting this core are a larger group of members who actively participate in Komsomol activities and promote the organization's aims for purely careerist reasons. Although, as

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[3]Merle Fainsod, How Russia is Ruled (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953),256-257.

[4]Ibid., 258-259.

Fainsod admits, the reports of these émigrés may be subjective, he also acknowledges that these statements have to be taken seriously.

The disquieting dichotomy in the character of Komsomol members has made it very difficult to make a conclusive description of the "average" Komsomol member's temperament, especially since a member's loyalty to the League changed in accordance with his internal beliefs and to external factors.[5] Nevertheless, in his book Smolensk under Soviet Rule, which was based on research from Soviet archival documents captured during the Second World War, Fainsod once again attempts to determine the disposition of Komsomol members. In his chapter on the Komsomol Fainsod reveals the difficulties which the League encountered during recruiting drives in rural areas of the Western Oblast (region) in the early 1920s. Members often did not conform to the Komsomol's strict code of ethics regarding alcoholism and discipline, and even flouted direct Party orders on anti-religious propaganda.[6] Fainsod continually emphasizes that many Komsomolites were openly hostile towards the Party. This antagonism led many Komsomol members to refuse to participate in the attacks on the Right and Left Opposition movements in the late 1930s and to criticize both Stalin and the Soviet regime, a demonstration which would lead to imprisonment and death.[7] Such attacks did not only reflect disil-

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[5]Ibid., 259.

[6]Merle Fainsod, Smolensk under Soviet Rule (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958),412-413.

[7]Ibid., 422. For more information on the Right and Left Opposition movements see chapters three and four.

lusionment with the government but were also open espousals for its overthrow.

Besides focusing on the disaffection of rural Komsomol members Fainsod also discusses the activities of the Komsomol during the period of the New Economic Policy, collectivization, and the Stalinist political purges of the late 1930s, which he analyzes in great detail. He also outlines the various political and economic requirements delegated to Komsomol members by the Party and illustrates how the requirements changed in accordance with the new program of the Party. Since his research was concentrated on only one area of the Soviet Union, Fainsod has made no attempt to extrapolate his findings and portray the role of the Komsomol throughout the entire country.

The task of analyzing the Komsomol's duties throughout the entire Soviet Union was left to Ralph T. Fisher, whose book, Pattern for Soviet Youth A Study of the Congresses of the Komsomol, 1918-1954, is perhaps the most comprehensive study of the League. Fisher defines his work as an analysis of "the chronological and topical pattern of demands made upon Komsomolites by the Soviet authorities: the Party, the government, and the Komsomol itself."[8] Compliance with his goal shaped Fisher's book into an extensive examination of the Komsomol's role in Soviet domestic and international affairs, with special attention devoted to the political machinations between the Soviet leadership and the

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[8]Ralph T. Fisher, Pattern for Soviet Youth A Study of the Congresses of the Komsomol, 1918-1954 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959),x.

Komsomol Central Committee.

Fisher's approach suffers from two minor, yet important, drawbacks. Firstly, by deciding to focus exclusively on the Komsomol congresses between 1918 and 1954, Fisher has inadvertently relegated the time between congresses to a position of secondary importance. Consequently, important directives and orders by the Party and the Komsomol Central Committee during this interim, and especially during the Second World War, are overlooked.[9]

This problem has forced Fisher to designate less space to an examination of the duties of local Komsomol cells, an oversight which results in the second flaw of the book: Fisher, perceiving his own preset limitations, has been unable to "estimate how far the demands upon Komsomolites were realized in practice".[10] When it is known that Fisher, prior to writing his book, had conducted interviews with Soviet refugees, it becomes apparent that he was in a position to judge the success of the indoctrination of Komsomolites.[11] Therefore, the constraints he applies to himself seem entirely unwarranted. An analysis which could have incorporated the results of these interviews, however, may have necessitated a shorter temporal framework.

Studies of the Komsomol in the mid-1960s have focused on the psychological implications of the control mechanisms placed upon

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[9]The periods between 1936 and 1949, and 1950 and 1954, in which there were no Komsomol congresses, have been badly neglected by Fisher.

[10]Fisher, xiii.

[11]Ibid., xiii.

Komsomol members by the Party. In the book, Soviet Institutions, the Individual and Society, Karel and Irene Hulicka, a historian and psychologist respectively, give a brief history of the Komsomol's foundation and early programs, outline the organization and structure of the Komsomol, and list the contemporary duties required of League members. Their analysis of the historical evolution of the Komsomol is brief since the central purpose of the chapter, and arguably its most important section, is to illustrate the impact of the Komsomol on the individual and society.

The Hulickas maintain that because Komsomol members must participate in the indoctrination of others, passive acceptance of Party doctrines would not be possible under the watchful eyes of Party supervisors.[12] As a result, they portray Komsomol members as zealous youths who readily accept the convincing propaganda of the Party. Through the Komsomol, the individual has become an obedient servant of the Party.[13]

The Hulickas also claim that Soviet youths have, on the whole, accepted the dictatorial nature of Soviet society. Since the control mechanisms of the Komsomol are simply a reflection of Soviet society, the Hulickas believe that they are "reasonably

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[12]Karel and Irene Hulicka, Soviet Institutions, the Individual and Society (Boston: The Christopher Publishing House, 1967),135.

[13]While this claim may be difficult to believe, it may have been true in some cases. For example, Peter Kenez, in The Birth of the Propaganda State, claims that "propagandists usually were the first to become victims of their own propaganda", (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985),85.

acceptable to the young people themselves."[14] In spite of this, they admit that opposition to the regime may appear. Youths who would rebel against the Soviet leadership, however, "would probably not be contented under any other social system either."[15] This view of Komsomol members, which discounts the disillusionment harboured by many youths, appears far too simplified to be realistic.

Allen Kassof, in his book The Soviet Youth Program, concurs that many Komsomolites were dedicated followers of Party directives. Their dedication, however, was both ideological and careerist, a reason which was not even considered by the Hulickas. From here, Kassof's analysis begins to differ from that of the Hulickas'.

He argues that the League took on a mass character to indoctrinate as many youths as possible which resulted in many youths becoming apathetic and unresponsive to training. As a result the Party obtained

> a means of control purchased at the substantial cost of discouraging and scattering within a huge organization a hard core of enthusiastic and committed members, whose influence upon other youths otherwise might be greater.[16]

Kassof reaches this conclusion after analyzing the articles and stories written by Komsomol members in Soviet newspapers and journals. Oddly, the Hulickas label the reports of dissatisfied

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[14]Hulicka, 140.

[15]Ibid., 147.

[16]Allen Kassof, The Soviet Youth Program (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965),121.

and unresponsive Komsomol members in the Soviet press as "isolated examples of misbehaviour."[17] Two such fundamental disagreements on the character of Komsomol members clearly illustrates that the dichotomy revealed by Fainsod had still not been resolved nearly a decade later.

In his book Youth and Communism, Richard Cornell discusses the birth and organization of the Komsomol and its relationship to the Party. The book is, however, concerned mainly with the Communist Youth International and the international communist youth movements in Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In a comparative analysis of communist youth organizations Cornell illustrates how in 1956 disaffection among members, most of whom were students, of Eastern European youth organizations caused serious uprisings in East Bloc countries, the repercussions from which were felt in the USSR.[18] Though many East European youths did not support the communist system, Cornell reveals that they militantly supported revolutionary change. If these youths were as dedicated to their cause as Cornell claims, then it is possible that similar feelings could have been experienced by Komsomol youths.

The militancy of youths is discussed further by Cornell in his book Revolutionary Vanguard: The Early Years of the Communist Youth International, 1914-1924. He clearly illustrates the dichotomy between the rebellious nature of youths when they are promoting a

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[17]Hulicka, 146.

[18]Richard Cornell, Youth and Communism (New York: Walker and Company, 1965),183.

cause in which they believe, and their apathy when their cause becomes dreary, irrelevant, and manipulated to conform to the interests of adults.[19] When there no longer existed a revolutionary cause which would result in immediate change this apathy prompted youths to gradually abandon the youth movement. The possibility of these two extremes, which were similarly experienced by Komsomol members during the Civil War and NEP periods respectively, could help explain the confusing dual nature of the Komsomol.

This brief exposition[20] of some of the major works on the Komsomol has revealed two very important trends. Firstly, it is apparent that the character of the "average" Komsomol member cannot be neatly categorized into the classifications of unquestionably loyal or completely disillusioned. These feelings reflect the extreme position of members, as the majority lie somewhere in between these two poles according to the conscience of each member. The only way to know fully the beliefs of individual members, and hence of the Komsomol as a whole, would be to conduct lengthy interviews with them. Although this painstaking process has been attempted by both Fainsod and Fisher, it has not led to any

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[19]Richard Cornell, Revolutionary Vanguard: The Early Years of the Communist Youth International 1914-1924 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982),293-294.

[20]Avkash Sharma's work The Young Communist League of the USSR (Delhi: Navyug Publishers, 1981) and Jim Riordan's editorship of Soviet Youth Culture (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), which includes one chapter on the Komsomol, are two other recent studies of the Komsomol. The former's political agenda renders it unreliable and the later's concentration on the 1980s takes it out of the scope of this study.

conclusive results.

The preoccupation with assessing the attitude of members has led to the second point, namely, that none of these works has attempted to analyze comprehensively the particular duties of Komsomol members within certain fields of Soviet society. Although Fisher and, to a lesser extent, Fainsod have described some of the grass-roots work of Komsomol members, Fisher's analysis is diluted by his concentration on the high-level political activities of the Komsomol and by the huge time period he covers. Conversely, Fainsod's analysis is too cursory to pay particular attention to the Komsomol's role in some of the most dramatic events in the early period of the Soviet Union.

This study of the Komsomol will rely mostly on Soviet sources that detail the day-to-day tasks of Komsomolites in various fields of Soviet society, such as factories, farms, and schools. A thorough study of the Komsomol from these sources is possible since, as previously noted, the documents and literature on the subject are abundant and detailed. Unfortunately, these sources suffer from two serious drawbacks, both of which are caused by the Soviet dictatorship's monopoly on information.

The first major problem is that Soviet authors have glorified the work of the Komsomol, stating falsehoods, omitting important events, and manipulating facts and figures for political purposes. Secondly, this illusion created by Soviet propaganda has led to a

misrepresentation of the exact character of Komsomol members.[21] As a result, it is difficult to determine the attitude of most Komsomolites to their work.

Because of these serious problems Soviet sources must be treated with extreme caution. Facts and figures which they present must be scrutinized in conjunction with information from various Western authors. Consultations with these works have proven beneficial in preventing the unconscious adoption of Soviet propaganda. Although most of the Western sources used in this study do not directly focus on the activities of the Komsomol they create an accurate background upon which an analysis of the Komsomol may be undertaken. The factual discrepancies existing between Western and Soviet sources, most of which are Party and Komsomol documents, has also aided attempts to define both the particular goals which the Party hoped to accomplish through the Komsomol and the character of the ideal Komsomolite.

This study will focus on the grass-roots tasks of the Komsomol during the early formative years of the organization: the Civil War (1918-1920), and industrialization and collectivization under the First Five Year Plan (1928-1932). These two periods, while being the most dramatic episodes in the early political development of

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[21]The disillusionment, as outlined by Ralph Fisher, which many Komsomol members experienced with the NEP period has been glossed over by Soviet authors. They also claim that the Komsomol was actively opposed to Trotsky as early as 1922. See, for example, B.N. Pastukhov's enormous work Slavnyi put' Leninskogo Komsomola istoriia VLKSM (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1978),136-155. The discrepancy between the interpretations of Pastukhov and Fainsod, both of whom quote from Soviet archival documents, is striking.

the Soviet state, are also the periods in which the activity of the Komsomol was the most vibrant.[22] The heightened activity of the League during these times should facilitate an evaluation of the character of Komsomol members, its principal social duties, and the control of the organization by the Party. Although some of the findings and opinions will be speculative, and others will be similar to those found in some of the earlier works previously examined, they will all contribute to a fuller understanding of both the Komsomol and the nature of Soviet society.

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[22]Merle Fainsod writes that "the initiation of the Five Year Plan in 1928 aroused an outburst of zeal and fervour among the Komsomols for which only the period of Revolution and Civil War furnished a parallel." Fainsod, How Russia is Ruled, 245.

1
The Birth and Organization of the League

The revolutionary youth movement in late nineteenth century Russia was an important force promoting the overthrow of the Romanov dynasty and the establishment a new political order. Since these goals concurred with those of the Bolsheviks[1], attempts were made to co-opt the country's youths and channel their energies into support for the Bolshevik Party. After fifteen years of trying to dominate the student movement, the Bolsheviks, to the chagrin of other revolutionary parties, succeeded in October 1918 when they coordinated the establishment of the Komsomol.[2] This triumph would finally allow the Party to exploit the dedication and loyalty to the revolutionary cause of many young idealistic radicals.

Tacit support from the country's youths for the Bolshevik political program was, however, considered insufficient by Lenin. The planned establishment of a Bolshevik dictatorship necessitated the complete subordination of youths to the interest of the Party.

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[1]At the II Russian Social Democratic Labour Party Congress in 1903 the membership split in two factions: the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. This division was solidified in 1912. At the VII Party Congress in 1917 the Bolshevik's name was changed to the Russian Communist Party (bolshevik), and modified at the XIV Party Congress in April 1925 to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (bolshevik).

[2]When the Komsomol was formed in 1918 it was entitled the "Russian Communist Youth League" (RKSM). At the Sixth Komsomol Congress in 1924 the name was changed to the "Russian Leninist Communist Youth League" (RLKSM), and only at the Seventh Congress in 1926 was the name "All-Union Leninist Communist Youth League" (VLKSM) finally adopted.

Consequently, the Komsomol became completely dominated by the Bolsheviks and capable of promoting only Bolshevik political and social policies. Although statements by leaders of the Party and Komsomol claimed that the organization was independent, from the moment it was created the Komsomol, and the country's revolutionary youths, were completely subordinated to the Bolsheviks.

The revolutionary youth movement took root in Russia in the late 1850s and early 1860s. The Circle of Kazan Students at Moscow University, founded in 1859, as well as the societies Land and Liberty and Young Russia, established in 1860 and 1862 respectively, were all leading forces in the crusade to bring an end to tsarism. Members of these organizations distributed unauthorized newspapers and leaflets, preached seditious revolutionary propaganda, and promoted a campaign of revolutionary terrorism. They also engaged in the populist program of going "to the people", an equally important part of the revolutionary program. Adopting the ideas of Herzen, Bakunin, and Chernyshevsky,[3] many of Russia's well-educated youths travelled to the countryside to preach revolution to the peasants. Although this program ended with little success, it established the dynamic of the revolutionary youth movement: the formation of policy and planning was to be

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[3]The founder of Russian Populism, Alexander Herzen, in the early 1800s, preached the distrust of democracy and the need to create revolutionaries who were dedicated to the people. Adopting many of Herzen's ideas, especially for the promotion of the obshchina (agrarian communities), Mikhail Bakunin advocated supporting revolutionary feelings among the peasants. In the late 1800s Nikolai Chernyshevsky, embracing the ideas of Herzen and Bakunin, theorized the benefits which emancipation and revolution would have on the peasantry.

centred in the cities where urban biases would dominate thinking, after which the policies would be thrust upon the rest of the country.

The dedication which Russia's students held for the cause of revolution did not go unnoticed by contemporary political leaders. In order to promote one's political organization "all the prevailing currents of thought from liberal to democratic and Socialist fought to gain control over the student body."[4] Lenin and the Bolshevik Party were no exception. If their party were to prevail over the others in the quest for political power, it would be necessary to manipulate the student movement to support the Bolsheviks openly.

The first step towards the acquisition of this goal came in 1903 at the II Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP). During the congress a resolution was adopted which called for the party's support of the growing revolutionary student movement. This was an attempt to channel the energies of the movement into the **socialist** program.[5] Efforts to co-opt the student movement continued in 1905 with the formation of the Student Organization of the St. Petersburg Committee of the RSDLP and with the establishment of a Moscow student youth organization under the patronage of Nikolai Bukharin and Grigorii Sokol'nikov,

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[4]Franco Venturi, Roots of Revolution (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1952), 220.

[5]Fisher, 3.

both of whom were members of the Bolshevik faction of the RSDLP.[6] From these few examples it becomes clear that even many years before the Russian Revolution the Bolsheviks were cultivating their contacts with revolutionary youths in Russia.

Following the February Revolution and the return of Lenin in 1917, the Bolsheviks worked feverishly to establish a wide-based youth organization which would be fully under their control and capable of supporting opposition to the Provisional Government. To this end, the Bolsheviks organized a general meeting for youths in June 1917, but failed to attract more than 200 people.[7] Although a dismal failure, this undertaking was a valuable educational experience from which the Bolsheviks could learn how to establish a viable youth organization.

Better results were achieved the following month in Petrograd where the Bolsheviks sponsored the establishment of the Socialist Union of Young Workers. During the first conference of this organization on August 18, 1917, the delegates adopted a program and constitution and elected a ruling committee, the most prominent members of which were the Bolsheviks V. Alekseev, O. Ryvkin, M. Glebov, and E. Gerr. Furthermore, it was decided that as an organization of proletarian youth representing various socialist parties, the primary aim of the Socialist Union was to foster class consciousness among youths. The ruling committee then adopted two

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[6]Ibid., 4.

[7]A. Shokhin, Kratkaia istoriiia VLKSM (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1928), 44.

additional clauses which committed the Union to promote both the socialist cause and the Bolshevik Party. Following the conference the committee delegates pledged themselves to this task in a letter to Lenin.[8]

The framework of the Socialist Union established a pattern upon which the Bolsheviks could model future youth organizations. The most important characteristic to emulate was the domination of the group's leadership by trustworthy Bolsheviks. The belief that this measure would assure the Party of the organization's subservience was confirmed when, on October 10, the Socialist Union's ruling committee adopted a clearly pro-Bolshevik four-point program. The first point stated that it was mandatory for all Bolshevik Party members under the age of twenty to enlist and take an active part in the Socialist Union. This was followed by the requirement that Union members train groups of communists, and by two points which were concerned with administrative matters of the organization.[9] To ensure that their four-point program would be accepted unquestionably by the organization's members, the leadership adopted the policy of democratic centralism.[10]

In August 1918, one year after the establishment of the

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[8]V.G. Vel'mitskii, V edinom stroiu (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo Universiteta, 1968), 5-6.

[9]Ibid., 7.

[10]The policy of democratic centralism, created by the Bolshevik Party in an attempt to prevent factionalism, forbade Party members from discussing policies once the leadership had decided upon a course of action. The Socialist Union's adoption of this practice is further evidence of their subservience to the Party.

Socialist Union, the Bolsheviks helped organize the first conference of the Moscow Guberniia (province) Union of Working Youths. Applying what they learned in Petrograd with the Socialist Union, the Bolsheviks supported the creation of a Bolshevik dominated leadership. To this end, the Party was aided by two youths from Moscow, E. Tsetlin and N. Penkov, and one from Petrograd, M. Glebov, who had been instrumental in the establishment and development of the Socialist Union. The influence of the Bolshevik Party in the youth movement was noticeably spreading.

Following the Moscow meeting these three youths sought a conversation with Lenin through the intermediary of his wife, Nadezhda Krupskaia. They hoped that with his help the Moscow group could make contact with other Bolshevik supported local, guberniia, and oblast youth organizations throughout Russia for the purpose of inviting them to an upcoming All-Russian Congress of Worker and Peasant Youth Leagues. Lenin did not disappoint them. Near the end of August the Bolshevik Party Central Committee created an organizational <u>buro</u> which was charged with the task of summoning members to the first All-Russian congress. The <u>buro</u> consisted of two members from the Petrograd and Moscow youth groups, one from the Urals, as well as Yakov Sverdlov, who was a representative of the Party Central Committee.

With youth organizations established in Petrograd, Moscow, Kiev, Odessa, Sverdlovsk, and other cites throughout the former Russian Empire, the organizational <u>buro's</u> task of mustering members from all of these places was significant. In an attempt to fulfil

this goal the Petrograd members of the buro helped members of the Socialist Union to convene a meeting of youth groups from Petrograd, Novgorod, Pskov, and other northern oblasts on October 20. At this gathering the members adopted a program and regulations for the All-Russian congress. They also resolved that when the congress was convened a special organ dedicated solely to the plight of village youth organizations would be created.[11] The Bolsheviks realized, just as the Populists had before them, that the key to spreading revolution in Russia lay with the support of the peasantry.

The All-Russian congress was finally set to convene in Moscow at the People's Commissariat of Enlightenment from October 29 to November 4, 1918. Prior to this, members from Petrograd and Moscow had proposed that the agenda would include the following issues: organizational and financial questions, cultural work, defence of the economic interests of youths, and the youth movement in the West, all of which were to be organized under the broad themes of science and the proletariat, proletarian art, work in clubs, and work in theatrical groups. It had been further decided that once these issues had been discussed a central committee for the organization would be elected.[12] A brief look at this preliminary program reveals that the Komsomol was designed to play an important role in cultural work.

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[11]Vel'mitskii, 7.

[12]N. Trushchenko, Istochnik sily (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1973), 88-89.

Incapable of fulfilling these plans for the congress by themselves, youths from Moscow and Petrograd had to rely on extensive help from the Bolshevik Party. The convention of the All-Russian congress was published in many local Party newspapers, and Party members were encouraged to help youths make their way to Moscow. E. Drabkina, a member of this initial congress, later wrote that the Bolsheviks "helped us to get in touch with local organizations, and supplied money and documents to the delegates."[13]

Immeasurable help to the youth movement came particularly from Yakov Sverdlov. In a circular letter to local Party organs, dated November 1918, Sverdlov announced the creation of an "independent" youth organization which was dedicated to the struggle for communism. He then instructed local Party organs to support, without interfering in the principle of independence, the local Komsomol cells; to facilitate the creation of youth organizations in places where none existed; to instruct youths in their lecture and agitation work; to help youths overcome technical obstacles in their work; and to facilitate the education of local Komsomol members. Sverdlov justified the close relationship between the Party and the Komsomol by stating that the "League was a school where new conscious communists were prepared."[14] Although, he had made it clear that Party organs were not permitted to interfere in

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[13]Ibid., 86.

[14]L. Emel'ianova ed., Naslednikam Revoliutsii dokumenty partii o komsomole i molodezhi (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1969), 35.

the internal affairs of the organization, Sverdlov never doubted the subordination of the League to the Party. Placed in the position of guide and counsellor to Komsomol members, the Party could easily manipulate the everyday work of the League.

Such manipulation was assured with the further instruction by Sverdlov that "Party committees must always be well informed of the work of youth organizations" and that "it is recommended to all members of the Party, complying to the age limits, to enter the League and take an active part in its work."[15] The fulfilment of this measure would assure the Party that a core of loyal supporters existed within the League. This move would facilitate Party control of the organization while still maintaining the notion that it was independent of the Party.

When the congress finally convened on October 29, in attendance were 176 delegates with voting privileges and 19 without, representing 22,100 young people throughout Russia. Of these delegates 88 were Communists, 38 were communist sympathizers, 3 were Mensheviks, 2 were left SRs[16], and 45 had no party affili-

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[15]Ibid. Although young Party members were required to enter the Komsomol, their number was never very significant. For example, in 1929 only 10.4 percent of Komsomolites were also Party members. See A. Kamshalov, Leninskii Komsomol (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1969), 444.

[16]In 1917 the Left Social Revolutionaries cooperated with the Bolsheviks in obstructing the work of the Constituent Assembly, but later broke with them over the acceptance of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk in 1918.

ation.[17] Representation at the congress was firmly in the hands of the Bolsheviks and they used this support to adopt a three-point program which was favourable to them. It was agreed by the members that the League would try to attract both worker and peasant youths into its ranks, it would fight in support of the October Revolution, and would push for the expansion of the League within the boundaries of the former Russian Empire.[18] The Party now had an organization which was willing to support the gains of the Bolsheviks in October and to augment this victory by bringing the lands of Imperial Russia under Bolshevik control.

The acceptance of this program by the delegates was achieved very easily. Problems, however, arose over the designation of the organization's official name. Three possible choices were proposed: the Russian Communist Youth League; the Socialist Union of Worker Youth - III International; and the Socialist Union. The Bolshevik delegates favoured the first option since it would illustrate the League's allegiance to the Bolsheviks, who had changed their name to the Russian Communist Party (bolshevik) in March 1918. These delegates, however, met opposition from the other socialist members and from the non-party delegates, all of whom believed that adopting the title "communist" would disgruntle both workers and peasants, and would thereby marginalize the group.

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[17]Shokhin, 58. In some of the Soviet literature the 2 left SRs have been labelled as anarchists and the 3 Mensheviks as Social Democratic Internationalists, an unknown political label which Ralph Fisher has adopted as correct. Fisher, 10.

[18]Shokhin, 59.

Following a meeting between several communist delegates and Lenin, at which they were told that the Russian Communist Party would support them, it was decided that the communist bloc in the union should muster support and push through the first option.[19]

The matter was then put to a vote before all members of the congress. With six votes against and seventeen abstentions the delegates decided to adopt the name Russian Communist Youth League.[20] This title became one of three fundamental characteristics of the organization, the second being the claim that the League was an independent organization, which was made obsolete by the third characteristic: "the Youth League expresses its full solidarity with the Russian Communist Party (b), and it has as its aim the diffusion of the communist idea and the attraction of worker and peasant youths into the active structure of Soviet Russia."[21] After the creation of this basic platform a fifteen member and seven candidate central committee was elected, all the positions being filled by Communists. Moreover, the Moscow youth leaders Tsetlin and Penkov were nominated to a three person presidium with special administrative functions. All of these measures guaranteed the domination of the organization by the Russian Communist Party.[22]

To clarify the relationship between the League and the Party,

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[19]Vel'mitskii, 11.

[20]Trushchenko, 93.

[21]Ibid., 95.

[22]Ibid.

and secure the subordination of the former to the latter, the Komsomol Central Committee issued the decree "On the Interrelationship between the Russian Communist Youth League and the Russian Communist Party (b)" in August 1919. This order stated that the League accepted the program and tactics of the Russian Communist Party and that its cells would work under the control of central and local Party collectives. Furthermore, Party cells were instructed to offer ideological and material support to Komsomol cells; all Party members under the age of twenty were obliged to enter the League's ranks; local Party organizations and cells were directed to create Komsomol cells in villages, factories, and other levels if none were in existence; Komsomol members were ordered to support Party organizations; and local Komsomol cells were forced to work under the control of the local Party committees.[23] Although this order was supposed to represent an agreement between two independent organizations, it clearly marked the further subordination of the Komsomol to the Russian Communist Party.

In an appendage to this directive, the Komsomol Central Committee permitted additional Party control of the organization by sanctioning that:

> local Russian Communist Party cells are recommended to create fractions in Komsomol cells only in the case when there is the following of a non-communist line, when weak political work is conducted, when petit-bourgeois kulak elements[24] exist in the organization, and when the leading organs are not

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[23]L. Antipina ed., KPSS o komsomole i molodezhi (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1958), 33-34.

[24]Refer to chapter 4 for information on the kulaks.

dominated by Party members.[25]

This appendage essentially gave Party cells carte blanche in their dealings with the Komsomol. It would hence be possible to subvert completely the authority of any Komsomol cell under the pretext that its members were not following a communist line. The actions of the Komsomol, therefore, had to comply unequivocally with the wishes of the Party.

The organizational structure of the Komsomol, which was also framed at the first congress, easily conformed to Party standards since it closely resembled the apparatus of the Russian Communist Party. Membership was limited to those between the ages of 14 and 23, those reaching the upper limit being allowed to remain in the organization but without the right to vote. Youths were admitted to the League as candidate members and were not permitted to carry a Komsomol card until they were confirmed at the general meeting of a local Komsomol cell, the size of which usually varied from 10 to 15 people. Komsomolites could be expelled for three reasons: non-payment of the fifty kopek union fee; opposition to the League's program and constitution; and disobeying the orders of the League.[26] Upon expulsion the local Komsomol cell would announce at meetings the name of the member who was expelled, as well as publish his name in the Komsomol's press. Since such an act would severely harm the future of that person, threat of expulsion could

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[25]Antipina, 34.

[26]V. Kolosov, Tovarishch komsomol (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1969), 9-11.

be used to coerce difficult members.

At the Third Komsomol Congress in Moscow from October 2 to 10, 1920, this brief framework was enlarged. The criteria regarding membership were expanded to include the stipulation that "worker and peasant youth are accepted into the organization without any recommendation. All remaining youths were admitted on the recommendation of two members of the Russian Communist Party and the Russian Communist Youth League."[27] This was an obvious attempt by the Party to exclude from the Komsomol those people with questionable class backgrounds. Since the Komsomol, as a mass organization, could not be entirely dominated by Communists,[28] this important measure would exclude those elements which it was assumed would work against the Soviet leadership. Having accomplished this, the task of maintaining a communist line in the organization would be simplified.

The Komsomol, like the Party, was structured along the principle in which cells were created to correspond to territorial units of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic.[29] The

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[27]Ibid., 41.

[28]When the Komsomol was created the organization had 22,100 members. This number would increase to nearly two million by the end of the 1920s. For a complete list of Komsomol membership until 1954 see Fisher, 409. Also, refer to pages 67-68 and 417 for information on female delegates and nationality distribution respectively.

[29]The RSFSR, which adopted its constitution on July 10, 1918, corresponded roughly to the area of present-day Russia. The USSR was established on December 27, 1922, and included, besides the RSFSR, the Byelorussian, Ukrainian, and Transcaucasian Soviet Socialist Republics.

most basic level was the local Komsomol cell. Located in schools, factories, and villages, these cells were by far the most numerous. A local cell could be created on the initiative of three Komsomolites, so long as it was confirmed by a local Komsomol committee. Following the local level, in order of significance, were the uezd (district), guberniia, kraj (territory) and oblast cells, as well as cells representing the territory of an independent republic and the territory of the RSFSR. While each level of the organization was responsible for various functions, they were all interdependent through the policy of shared responsibility.

Local cells were charged with the task of preaching communist propaganda and the slogans of the organization to the population. In order to attract new members to the League, Komsomolites were required to be a shining example of the ideal communist youth in the hope that other youths would want to emulate them. Since the behaviour of Komsomolites was bridled by League rules, the Soviet leadership desired that the expansion of the organization would promote discipline among young people and thereby increase their productivity. Particular attention was also given to the political-enlightenment work of the cells, which performed this duty at regular meetings and at educational lessons and classes. These activities were intended to be the cornerstone of the League's political indoctrination campaign.[30]

Control of the local cells by the Party was maintained in

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[30]Kolosov, 42-43. The forthcoming chapters will discuss the required readings for Komsomolites in the military, industry, and in the countryside.

numerous ways. It was necessary for local cells to hold a general meeting, at which questions regarding the work of the cells could be tabled, no less than once a week. The minutes of each meeting were then reported by an elected buro of the local cell to the local organizational committee, an organ which in turn was elected by a general meeting of the local cell and was commissioned to administer all business of the cell. This committee was then itself charged with reporting twice a month to the local uezd and guberniia committees on the work of the cell. Through this system the higher Komsomol cell could keep a very close watch on the affairs of the lower levels.[31]

While the uezd, guberniia, kraj, and oblast cells had slightly different tasks assigned to them, they all essentially fulfilled the same role of monitoring the work of the lower levels and of reporting to the higher level. For example, the uezd cells, which were administered by an elected committee of three to five members, divided their work into special departments with designations such as political enlightenment, economic-legal, and military-sport.[32] A secretariat coordinated the work of these departments, as well as performed the duty of liaison with the local Komsomol cells, whereafter it reported to the uezd committee on the performance of both levels. Following this, the uezd committee was responsible for reporting to the guberniia committee the findings of the secretariat. It was the obligation of the guberniia committee to ensure

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[31]Kolosov, 43.

[32]Ibid., 46.

that the uezd cells had performed the duties entrusted to them. Although this pattern of overlapping authority and accountability ensured that individuals would attempt to fulfil the mandates of the Komsomol, it also allowed for dereliction of duty with the aim of "passing the buck" to higher authorities. While this process may result in a log-jam at the higher levels, it would be preferable to allowing individual Komsomol members to use their initiative.

The dictates and policies of the Komsomol were usually transmitted to lower levels by means of conferences and congresses. The uezd committee was responsible for the election of members who were to attend guberniia conferences, where the agenda of All-Russian Komsomol congresses and conferences were discussed. The representatives at the guberniia conferences also received dictates from the Komsomol Central Committee, which they then had to transmit to all lower levels. The requirement that guberniia cells report monthly on their work to the Central Committee was a successful way of monitoring their actions. The mandatory publication in Komsomol'skaia pravda[33] and in information reports of a cell's performance was another effective way of supervising the work of lower levels. Komsomolites sought to perform their duties admirably for fear of inciting the wrath of both the Komsomol and Party Central Committees.

The highest administrative body of the Komsomol was its

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[33]Founded in 1925, Komsomol'skaia pravda was the official organ of the Komsomol and designed from Pravda, the mouthpiece of the Party.

fifteen member and seven candidate Central Committee. Working very closely with the departments of the Soviet government and with members of the Party leadership, the Komsomol Central Committee was responsible for coordinating League policies with the Party and setting the organizational agenda. An All-Russian congress, called yearly by the central committee or by one-third of the guberniia committees, was the means through which League policies were discussed and adopted.[34] As previously mentioned, the first Central Committee was dominated by trustworthy communists. The continuation of this trend was necessary since the majority of Komsomol members, many of whom were from the countryside, were not concurrently Party members.

Having outlined the organizational framework of the Komsomol and some of its basic duties, it is possible to look more closely at some of the specific roles which were assigned to it. During the first congress the duties of the Komsomol were outlined in a nine point program. Because of the importance of this program to the structure of the Komsomol, as well as its concise and straightforward nature, it is opportune to quote the program in its entirety:

1. Organize gatherings, meetings, and demonstrations of youths.

2. Publish papers, journals, brochures, and other literature for the purpose of promoting the idea of enlightening the lives of youth.

3. Create courses, universities, and labour schools and studies, where youths can develop and cultivate them-

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[34]Kolosov, 12-13.

selves.

4. Organize clubs, reading rooms, and various groups where young people can gather.

5. Spread among youths the ideas of sport and military learning, and organize corresponding organizations among youths.

6. Help codify into law the need to improve the condition of youths.

7. Take part in various state and labour organizations throughout the country for the purpose of defending the interests of youths.

8. Make contact with foreign youth organizations and take part in international youth congresses.

9. Taking into consideration the special conditions of life in the countryside, the work of the union will be led there along the following lines: a) unite young village bednota and develop their class consciousness; b) create an inseparable link between young proletarians of the city and the countryside; c) propagandize the idea of the communist progression of society and organize communes in the countryside.[35]

From this outline it is clear that the Komsomol had a very extensive task set before it. An analysis of this list reveals that the most important role of the Komsomol was the education and indoctrination of youth. Creating firm class consciousness, promoting political and technical training, and encouraging cultural enlightenment were all tasks which fell within the realm of the Youth League. Since the Russian Communist Party had complete control over the Komsomol and prevented it from independently adopting any major decisions, its work in these fields would consequently reflect the aims of the Party.

In the forthcoming chapters the functions of the Komsomol

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[35] Ibid., 10.

during the Civil War and the peacetime military as well as during the Soviet industrialization and collectivization campaigns will be individually elicited and examined. Although a study of the Komsomol's impact on Soviet society could involve an analysis of its role in schools or in the international movement, the specific reference to industry, agriculture, and the military in points five, seven, and nine legitimizes concentration on these three areas. The study will hence be limited both spatially and temporally, thereby allowing for deeper concentration on the subject and for a better understanding of the Komsomol and of Soviet society.

2
From the Civil War to the Formation of Komsomol Groups Assisting the Party

Russian participation in World War One was brought to an end in accordance with the Bolshevik negotiated Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which was signed with Imperial Germany in March 1918. Opposition to the agreement immediately appeared from former members of the Provisional Government, such as Alexander Kerensky, from the Socialist Revolutionary Party, once allies of the Bolsheviks, from Tsarist officers and supporters of the monarchy, and from Entente politicians, including Clemenceau and Lloyd George. Their resistance to the peace plan and their mutual loathing of the Bolsheviks drove these groups to unite in a common struggle to topple Lenin's government and recommence the war. With their base of power limited to Moscow and Petrograd the Bolsheviks would have to create a remarkable military machine in order to repel the initial attacks of their opponents. Determination on the part of both sides to destroy the other plunged Russia into a violent civil war which would only end with the defeat of Baron Wrangel in November 1920.[1]

Throughout the entire period of the Civil War the Party received momentous support from members of the Komsomol, many of

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[1]For an excellent analysis of the politics behind the creation of the Red Army in January 1918 and its success in the Civil War, see Mark von Hagen, Soldiers in the Proletarian Dictatorship London: Cornell University Press, 1990 and Harriet and William Scott, The Armed Forces of the USSR London: Arms and Armour Press, 1979.

whom admirably performed both the military and propaganda duties which were required of them. Although their dedication and loyalty to the Party were proven during the Civil War the Party did not reward Komsomol members by allowing them to create Komsomol cells in the military, a feat they would achieve only in 1930. The inherent distrust of all but Party members led to the relegation of Komsomolites into a subservient position vis-a-vis Party military organs. Komsomol prerogatives in the military would, however, increase throughout the early 1920s with the creation of Komsomol "groups assisting the Party" in 1924. Although these groups permitted the Komsomol to exercise greater authority over its members in the military, their creation was initiated solely for the benefit of the Party and reflected little consideration for the needs of Komsomol members.

Despite the fact that secondary Soviet sources make it very clear that the Party permitted an expansion of Komsomol authority in the military only when a threat to the Party's cohesiveness had become apparent and the direct control of Komsomol recruits had become both cumbersome and outdated, Soviet authors try to conceal this with assertions of the Party's unwavering trust in Komsomol members.[2] It has been necessary, therefore, to analyze Soviet

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[2]See for example G. Solonitsyn, "Komsomol na strazhe rodiny," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal 10 (1968) and Alexander Khmel, Education of the Soviet Soldier Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972. Soviet document collections, such as L. Antipina ed., KPSS o komsomole i molodezhi Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1958; V. Kolosov ed., Tovarishch Komsomol Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1969; and I. Kravtsov ed., KPSS o podgotovke molodezhi k voennoi sluzhbe Moscow: DOSAAF, 1985, offer very little information on early Party-Komsomol relations in the military.

sources on the military with extreme caution, especially with regard to the supposed enthusiasm of Komsomol members during the Civil War. In spite of these drawbacks, these same sources have provided a wealth of information and have enabled an analysis of the Komsomol's activities during, and immediately following, the Civil War.[3]

Throughout the course of the Civil War the Komsomol Central Committee organized nine different mobilizations of its membership for various military duties. Of these, the three most important were the All-Russian mobilizations in May and October 1919 and in March 1920 to the Eastern, Southern, and Polish fronts respectively.[4] During these three general mobilizations the Central Committee instructed each local cell to send a specific portion of its membership for military training and to the front with the warning

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[3]Although English sources, such as Michael Deane, Political Control of the Soviet Armed Forces (New York: Crane, Russak & Company, Inc., 1977); Zbigniew Brzezinski ed., Political Controls in the Soviet Army (New York: Research Program on the USSR, 1954); and Timothy Colton, Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), have added perspective to the information provided by Soviet sources, only the latter has devoted significant space to the study of the Komsomol, albeit only after 1924. Instead, these authors have focussed on the work of the Main Political Administration in the military. Sergei Zamascikov's monograph Political Organizations in the Soviet Armed Forces - The Role of the Party and Komsomol (Falls Church Va.: Delphic Associates Inc., 1982), provides the most detailed analysis of the Komsomol in the contemporary Soviet military.

[4]Shokhin, 74. The remaining six mobilizations were the special mobilization for political departments of the Tenth Army, May 1919; recruitment for the formation of privileged companies; mobilization for the defence of Petrograd, October 1919; mobilization of Ukrainian Komsomolites for the Wrangel front; first mobilization for command courses, Summer 1920; and second mobilization for command courses, Spring 1921.

that noncompliance with these orders would not be tolerated. The fear of punishment, perhaps even execution, for not fulfilling orders became the best incentive for Komsomol members to participate in the Civil War.

At the Second Komsomol Congress in October 1919 the Central Committee outlined in detail the regulations for the Second All-Russian mobilization. In six districts, Orlov, Tula, Voronezh, Ryazan, Tambov, and Kaluga, in the vicinity of the Southern front, organizations were to implement a general mobilization, i.e., all members were to be inducted into the armed forces. Outside of these six areas, and excluding the Petrograd organization, cells were to mobilize 30 percent of their members who were over the age of sixteen, the minimum age for enlistment. The demand from the Red Army for more soldiers must have been steadily growing during the Civil War since just five months earlier during the First All-Russian Mobilization the required number of members to be recruited had been set at only 20 percent.

Mobilization of members was to be conducted by a three person committee composed of senior members from each cell. Although they worked independently of outside interference they were instructed to report to Party committees and military commissars on their work.[5] Once formed, the committee was given one week to commence

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[5]To improve the military capabilities of the Red Army Leon Trotsky, the Commissar of War, found it necessary to permit Tsarist officers to lead Soviet military units. Politically reliable Party members were thereafter commissioned to these units to supervise the work of the officers. The induction of these military commissars resulted in the dual command structure of the military, as the orders of officers had to be sanctioned by the commissars.

recruitment of the designated number of Komsomol members from each cell and to have them report to Party and revolutionary committees for transport instructions. Following the completion of mobilization orders a Komsomol cell could continue to operate only if three active members were still present, which would not be the case where a general mobilization was ordered.[6]

The Second All-Russian mobilization also provided regulations for military-related activities. Komsomol members who could not meet either the age or physical requirements for military duty were ordered to help in supply, communication, and sanitation work, except in cases where their political qualifications were sufficient to permit them to work in agitation brigades. Female Komsomol members were instructed to work as medical attendants and in positions which were deemed suitable for women. The Bolshevik losses during the Civil War were apparently not so severe as to warrant the mobilization of women, a position which was abandoned during the Second World War.[7] These organizational duties occupied a significant part of the Komsomol's Civil War efforts, and, for reasons explained below, have been the point on which Soviet authors have focused their analysis of the Komsomol's military activities.

According to various Soviet sources the numbers raised by

See T. Colton, "Military Councils and Military Politics in the Russian Civil War," in A. Dallin ed., Civil-Military Relations in the Soviet Union (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992).

[6]Shokhin, 71.

[7]Antipina, 35.

these mobilizations range from 30,000 to 45,000 recruits. This rather large discrepancy reveals that Soviet scholarship has been superseded by Soviet propaganda. Many Soviet authors have pointed out that during the course of the Civil War all the Komsomol members who joined the Red Army did so enthusiastically and without a thought for their own personal safety. They also emphasize that the euphoria of the revolution inspired many members to volunteer for military service before the Komsomol Central Committee called for a general mobilization. Soviet authors claim that the secret enlistment of members is the reason for the numerical discrepancies.[8] This explanation, however, cannot be true.

If Komsomol members were secretly enlisting en masse for military duty one must ask why it was necessary for the Komsomol Central Committee to conduct nine mobilizations for the war. Also, if members immediately volunteered for duty once a mobilization had been called, the recruitment of members through a mobilization committee would have been unnecessary. A more plausible scenario was that Komsomol members were unwilling to volunteer for military service and were reluctant to be recruited by committees, which were under the guidance and pressure of military commissars. Albeit some urban Komsomol members wishing to imitate the heroism of the Red Guards may have volunteered to fight, it is extremely unlikely that rural Komsomol members whose concerns were confined to the village limits were willing participants in the Civil War.

Such exaggeration by Soviet authors can be illustrated in

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[8]See Shokhin, 73-74; Kamshalov, 223; and Pastukhov, 93.

another way. In order to incorporate those members who had covertly fought behind enemy lines into the total for Komsomol participation in the war, these authors felt justified in raising the number to nearly 60,000. If this number is believed it would mean that over 50 percent of the organization's membership in 1919 were mobilized to fight in the Civil War.[9] Since many members were not directly involved in military campaigns, this number is probably overstated. Unfortunately, since Soviet authors endlessly repeat these embellished figures it is difficult to estimate the exact number.

The preoccupation with numbers on the part of Soviet authors has led them to neglect an examination of the Komsomol's work in military divisions during the Civil War. One possible explanation for this may be that Soviet authors did not wish to reveal the strict control which Party organs exercised over Komsomol members in the ranks of the military.[10] While this control may be explained as an understandable precaution with untested recruits, it was more likely the result of the Party's fear of allowing politically unreliable armed youths extensive freedom of movement and the possibility of defection to the White forces. As a result, Soviet authors have focused on the military-related activities of the Komsomol, which were much less controlled by Party functionaries due to their less belligerent and strategic nature. The dichotomy between the treatment meted out to Komsomolites in

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[9]Shokhin, 75.

[10]Kamshalov, 214.

military units and those involved in military-related activities would continue to plague the Komsomol following the Civil War.

To familiarize Komsomol members with military duty the organization's Central Committee in 1919 ordered that all members had to undergo mandatory general military education, training which had become compulsory for all industrial workers between the ages of 18 and 40 in April 1918. In military courses Komsomol members were taught to use various firearms, they learned how to throw grenades and dig trenches, and were instructed in intelligence gathering. Those members who were endowed with a muscular physique were enrolled in classes for machine gunners, military technicians, and commanders. Although female members received military education together with their male counterparts, women were told to fulfil medical, and not direct military duties.[11] If members did not fulfil their obligatory military training sessions it was considered that they had broken Komsomol discipline and they were punished accordingly.

Besides military instruction, courses also focussed on political propaganda. Political discussions emphasizing the "military tradition of the working class", as well as films and lectures, occupied much of the time of Komsomol members during these courses. Some of the most common subjects of political lectures and discussions were the creation of the Red Army; resolutions of the Bolshevik Party; the biography of Lenin; and the

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[11] Ibid., 224.

unity of workers and the Red Army.[12] Following classes Komsomolites were instructed to teach the information which they had acquired during lectures to pre-conscript recruits. To support the operation of these courses Komsomol members were encouraged to collect money for purchasing books and other political literature.

Having acquired a basic military education Komsomol members and industrial workers could easily be assimilated into the military environment should the need arise.

> General military education was considered to be fundamental for the preparation and cultivation of each soldier in the required skills, with the aim of accelerating his further military training within the military unit in which he will be included.[13]

The daily requirement of two hours of political and military lectures would result in the successful militarization of society. Following the Civil War general military education would be moulded, with the support of Lenin, into the better sounding yet equally belligerent program of physical culture. Sports, such as gymnastics, fencing, boxing, skiing, and others which demanded both physical and mental concentration, would be encouraged by the state as a substitute for general military training.[14] The Party's emphasis on physical culture will be discussed in the following two chapters in relation to the industrialization and collectivization

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[12]M. Savinskii, "Zarozhdenie bibliotechnogo dela v krasnoi armii (1918-1920 gg.)," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal 3 (1977):96.

[13]V.G. Kolychev, "V.I. Lenin i voenno-patrioticheskoe vospitanie molodezhi (1917-1920 gg.)," Voprosy istorii KPSS 9 (1983):71.

[14]Kolychev, 73.

campaigns.[15]

Following their military education Komsomol members were sent for duty on both the civilian and military front lines in the Civil War. One of the most important tasks assigned to Komsomol members was political agitation among both civilians and soldiers through the distribution of Bolshevik propaganda, which was designed to strengthen support for the Party and for the military effort. Constantly in contact with both the front lines and the rear, Komsomolites often coordinated the transportation of military materiel to and from the front as well as sent messages to soldiers from the city Party organs and from the soldiers' families.[16] Komsomol members were extremely active in the countryside aiding the families of Red Army soldiers by helping them with farm work, and supplying them with both food and livestock. This philanthropical task would continue to be a part of the Komsomol's duties even following the Civil War.[17]

In the cities Komsomol members were visible supporting and promoting the war effort. In reserve units Komsomol members rounded up deserters and stood guard at munition dumps and

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[15]For a deeper analysis of the militarization of sport see James Riordan, Sport in Soviet Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). Chapter three is particularly valuable.

[16]Kamshalov, 240.

[17]Refer to chapter 17 of Merle Fainsod's Smolensk under Soviet Rule. Although Fainsod provides information on the military in the 1930s, he illustrates the difficulties experienced by soldiers' families and the disinterest of the military in their maintenance. In spite of the frequent use of soldiers in gathering the harvest, this information might bring into question the extent of the Komsomol's work in this area.

transport facilities, as well as collected warm clothes and other goods for the soldiers. They also organized working Saturdays (subbotniki) and Sundays (voskresniki) and movements such as the "Week of the Front" to raise money for wounded soldiers and their families. Money was further raised through special theatrical and musical performances, the contributions being used to buy goods for the front. Komsomol members even pressured factory workers to contribute part of their earnings and some of the factory's production for the soldiers at the front and for the war effort as well as persuaded workers to repair equipment efficiently, especially transport machinery crucial to the war effort. Women were called upon by Komsomol members to knit clothes for soldiers and comfort them during their recuperation in hospitals.[18] While all these efforts helped in the government's running of the war, they were more important in raising support for the war among the population as a whole.

Komsomol members, upon the recommendation of the cell's committee, also participated in the urban and military activities of the widely feared Cheka.[19] Recruited to help fight sabotage, counter-revolution, and war profiteering, enlistment in the Cheka gave Komsomolites the freedom to instill terror in the population.

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[18]Yu. Dzagurova et al., "Komsomol v gody grazhdanskoi voiny," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal 10 (1968):91-92.

[19]In December 1917 the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission was formed under the leadership of Felix Dzerzhinsky and was charged with the elimination of all counter-revolutionary activities. In 1921 their activities were expanded to include monitoring the borders of the RSFSR.

In Petrograd and Moscow Komsomol Chekists often received orders to round up suspected spies and white guard sympathizers. This order essentially gave them carte blanche to harass and imprison whomever they wanted.[20] One unfortunate outcome of this unbridled power was the habit of Komsomol Chekists to enlist people against their will into military detachments.[21] Despite such acts, Komsomol Chekists also performed benevolent duties. Endowed with special powers and authority, Komsomol Chekists could force war speculators to lower prices on precious goods so that people could afford to buy them. This action would then ease tensions in the cities and foster support for the Bolsheviks.

In the military sphere Komsomol Chekists were present to prevent the dereliction of duty on the part of soldiers and to supervise the actions of the important military horse regiments and armoured car divisions. The fear of Soviet justice which they instilled in soldiers was influential in furthering valour and patriotism at the front. One of their most important jobs in the pre-front areas was to round up people suspected of helping the enemy or of holding the wrong political sympathies. This was deemed an important measure if fifth column activities were to be brought under control. The performance of such duties was necessary following the war when some Komsomol members participated

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[20]Kamshalov, 281.

[21]N. Shalaginov, "Uchastie Viatskikh komsomol'stev v bor'be s Kolchakom," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal 5 (1972):81.

in the 1921 attack on the Kronstadt naval base.[22] Although Komsomol members participated in many Cheka detachments, and even comprised 50 percent of one, most Komsomolites did not participate in the activities of the Cheka, and those that did were closely supervised by experienced Party agitators.[23]

A great deal of the Komsomol's work in the Civil War was devoted to partisan activities in territory held by the enemy. Under the leadership of Bolshevik agitators, Komsomol members from cells in Soviet held territory which was adjacent to the front lines were influential in establishing illegal Komsomol organizations immediately behind enemy lines. Successfully organized conspiratorial groups were formed in the areas of the Ukraine around Kiev and Kharkov, and in the port city of Odessa. The underground Komsomol organization in this latter city held its conference every three days. Members would congregate to discuss the printing and distribution of banned literature, ways of expanding the organization, the collection of information on enemy activities, and the storage of guns and ammunition in preparation for the advance of Red Army soldiers.[24] This work was extremely dangerous, as the White armies showed little mercy for Soviet

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[22]In 1921 the sailors of Kronstadt, who had been the most militant supporters of the revolution, openly opposed the authoritarian policies of the Bolsheviks. Accompanied by politically reliable troops Leon Trotsky led an attack on the base and after a vicious battle crushed all opposition to the Bolsheviks.

[23]P. Dilanian, "Komsomol'tsy-chekisty v boiakh za rodinu," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal 12 (1968):108.

[24]Kamshalov, 254.

supporters, but is was necessary to facilitate the establishment of Soviet power on the heels of Red Army advances.

In rural areas occupied by White armies Komsomol members attempted to disrupt the enemy's lines of communication by destroying bridges, railway, and telegraph lines, and by reporting to Red Army intelligence on the movements of White Army divisions. They also tried to attract new members from occupied territories by informing people about the White terror, distributing Bolshevik papers and leaflets, and discrediting enemy youth organizations, such as the Ukrainian Workers' Communist Union of Youth. With underground activities extending throughout Ukraine, Byelorussia, the Caucasus, and Siberia, the partisan activities of Komsomol members, however successful they were, are proof of the daring of many members during the war.

Following the Bolshevik victory in the Civil War the Party rewarded over five thousand Komsomolites with the order of the Red Banner for their work in partisan groups and in regular military divisions, some of which were composed entirely of Komsomol members.[25] Proper recognition of Komsomol activities during the war should have warranted the establishment of Komsomol cells in military units. Many Komsomol members, believing that this was their due, had by the end of the war already established cells in their unit. The Party, now firmly in control of the country, ungraciously refused to sanction the creation of these rogue

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[25]G.V. Vorontsov ed., Partiinoe rukovodstvo komsomolom (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo leningradskogo universiteta, 1981), 117.

military Komsomol cells and continued to force Komsomol members to subordinate themselves to military Party organs.

Following a lively debate at the Second Komsomol Congress in 1919 the Central Committee concurred with the Party's decision and voted 120 to 94 that Komsomolites be required to register as candidate members of military Party organs.[26] Although some members of the Central Committee supported the creation of Komsomol cells in the military they were cajoled by E. Tsetlin, the young Bolshevik who was influential in the establishment of the Komsomol, to vote otherwise. He enunciated the Party's position that the creation of Komsomol cells would lead to dual authority and separatism in military units. As such a situation would not be conducive to Party control of the military it could not be permitted and the Komsomol Central Committee therefore resolved to disband all military Komsomol cells.[27]

This position was reaffirmed in November 1921 when a commission consisting of members from the Party Central Committee, the Revolutionary Military Council, the Political Administration of the Red Army, and the Komsomol Central Committee decided that Komsomol cells should not be created in the military and that all Komsomolites in the military should be inducted into Party cells as candidate members. When this report was placed before the Party, the Central Committee accepted the recommendation against the

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[26]Yu.P. Petrov, Stroitel'stvo politorganov, partiinykh i komsomol'skikh organizatsii armii i flota (1918-1968) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1968), 76.

[27]Fisher, 49.

creation of military cells but refused to allow the automatic induction of Komsomol members into the Party. It was believed that such an action would lower the political reliability of Party cadres by flooding the Party with many untested and unreliable members.[28]

After repeated requests from the Komsomol, especially at the Third Congress in 1920, to ameliorate the condition of its members in the military the Party decided to appease the organization through two harmless gestures; they granted the Komsomol patronage of the Navy in October 1921, and allowed them to create cells in military-educational institutions in December 1921. While both of these acts would deflect criticism that the Party was mistreating military Komsomol members they would also channel the energies of the youths into activities which would benefit the Party.

The Komsomol began its patronage duties by enlisting 2,000 of its members into naval work in February 1922, augmenting this number to 8,000 by the end of the year. Their immediate task was to repair ships and barracks which had been damaged during the Civil War. Since the complete rebuilding of Soviet Russia's naval forces was of great importance to the Party, the Central Committee instructed district Party committees to aid the Komsomol's mobilization by helping to select Komsomol members to lead enlistment efforts and ensuring transport so that the recruitment

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[28]Yu.P. Petrov, Partiinoe stroitel'stvo v sovetskoi armii i flote (1918-1961 gg.) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1964), 246-247.

ran on schedule.[29] Coordination and leadership of the Komsomol's patronage work was hence solely the prerogative of the Party.

The work demanded of naval Komsomol workers was very mentally taxing and so only "literate, physically strong, politically mature factory workers with length of service in the Komsomol of not less than one year"[30] were recruited by the district Komsomol committee. The focus of Komsomol work on rebuilding naval ships and dockyards further mandated the recruitment of industrial workers. Consequently, of the Komsomol members recruited for naval patronage duties, between 70 and 80 percent were urban workers.[31] To ensure the political reliability of the remaining 20 to 30 percent of Komsomolites the Komsomol Central Committee instructed that peasants were required to have been in the ranks of the Komsomol for not less than one year and any others for at least a year and a half.[32] With the help of these Komsomol members work was begun on building the Baltic, Black Sea, Caspian Sea, Northern Sea, and Far Eastern Fleets.

In 1922 and 1923 the Komsomol leadership expanded its

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[29]V. Nelaev, "Leninskii komsomol - shef flota (1922-1945 gg.)," in B. Nikiforov ed., Pozyvnye istorii vypusk tretii (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1973), 192.

[30]N. Berezovskii, "Komsomol'skie mobilizatsii v krasnoi flot v 1922-1923 gg," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal 7 (1983):78.

[31]Ibid., 79.

[32]S. Efimov, "Komsomol - shef flota," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal 10 (1972):71. To prevent the mistrust of the Party which was prevalent in the countryside from entering the ranks of the military, the Party insisted that a strong urban presence be created in each unit. See Fainsod, How Russia is Ruled, 402-403.

patronage duties in the navy when it instructed district and provincial Komsomol organizations to attach themselves to various fleets. As a result 25 primary Komsomol organizations were attached to the Baltic Fleet, 20 to the Black Sea Fleet, and 6 to the Caspian Sea Fleet.[33] The Komsomol organizations were responsible for accelerating the rebuilding of the respective fleets and therefore members organized subbotniki and voskresniki as well as concerts and stage productions to earn money for navy funds. These funds were augmented by Komsomol members in factories who were encouraged to "donate" a portion of their monthly earnings for the purpose of rebuilding the navy. The influence of urban workers in the navy would grow over time to the point where socialist competitions and shock worker brigades would be used in an attempt to raise the educational and disciplinary levels in the military.[34]

The interrelationship between naval and factory workers was an important measure in drawing the military and civilian societies closer together. To facilitate this closeness the Party declared the Week of the Red Navy in January 1923. Throughout this week the Komsomol was encouraged to collect food, books, clothing, and industrial surpluses from factories all of which would be donated

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[33]Nelaev, 195.

[34]G. Zelentsov, "Sotsialisticheskoe sorevnovanie v vooruzhennykh silakh," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal 9 (1973):74. Chapter 3 provides more information on the development of these movements during the industrialization campaign.

to Red Navy sailors.[35] To reciprocate these gestures, sailors often helped in factory production, repaired machinery and schools for workers' children, constructed water stands and pools as well as aided in the teaching of political and other lessons. These socialization efforts were especially strong in areas inhabited by non-Russians. By creating an affinity between the sailors and society the Party wished both to militarize the civilian society and destroy military elitism. The success of these measures would facilitate the Party's control over all segments of society.[36]

Education was a very important element in the patronage program of the Komsomol. In February 1922 the Komsomol began to replenish the students at the Naval Educational Facilities, at which they would receive a general military education including political subjects such as the History of the Party and the Russian Navy, and practical subjects such as naval signals and Morse code.[37] Candidates for the facilities were chosen by the local Komsomol committees, usually at industrial enterprises, according to assessments laid out by the Central Committee. They were then examined by a committee which consisted of members of the Party, the Komsomol, and the Navy, for health, general education, and political preparation. Having completed this stage they were sent

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[35]Nelaev, 196-197.

[36]See William Odom's article "The Militarization of Soviet Society," in A. Dallin ed., 260-277 for an explanation of the Party's attempts to break the military's <u>ésprit de corps</u>.

[37]Nelaev, 196.

to the school where the final decision on entrance would be made.[38] This examination process resulted in only politically reliable and physically fit Komsomolites being recruited into the naval educational facilities. Leading by example, they were required to promote political education, military discipline and education, and mastery of weaponry.

In December 1921 the Party thought it opportune to create Komsomol cells in all military educational institutions. While this move would alleviate the pressure which was put on the Party by the Komsomol Central Committee it would also facilitate the thorough political indoctrination of Komsomol members. Inside the closed environment of these institutions Party organizations could easily maintain tight control over Komsomol recruits, who, as illustrated above, were closely screened for their political reliability. Cells were created with a minimum of three Komsomol members and all Party members under the age of twenty were also instructed to enter. Within one year of their creation over 120 cells with 10,000 Komsomol members had been formed.[39]

Military training and political indoctrination courses ranged from three to four years of study, depending upon the specific area of the student. All students were required to study Marxism-Leninism, the History of the Civil War, and pedagogy, as well as strategy, tactics, and military economics and history. The

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[38]P. Golubev, "Leninskii komsomol i podgotovka kadrov dlia voenno-morskogo flota SSSR (1922-1941 gg.)," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal 9 (1972):85.

[39]Petrov, Partiinoe stroitel'stvo, 247.

specific duties of Komsomol cells ranged from promoting political indoctrination to tightening discipline. Despite the fact that Komsomol cells were required to coordinate their work with Party cells and were fully subordinated to them[40] they were still able to elect their own buro and administer the work of the cell, provided, however, that there were ten or more members in the cell.[41] Although their creation was a minor concession to the Komsomol it would allow the organization a great deal of autonomy in arranging its own work in educational institutions. The success of Komsomol training and indoctrination would be crucial to transforming the officer corps away from its Tsarist roots.

Although Komsomol members were allowed the freedom to organize their own work in educational institutions, they were not permitted such freedom in military units of the army and navy where Komsomol members were fully subordinated to Party members and had to obey their orders. In February 1923, the 1921 ban on Komsomol military cells was reaffirmed. However, the Party Central Committee resolved that educational work among military Komsomol members would proceed under the leadership of Party political organs, and that all Komsomolites would have to register in both the local Komsomol organization, from which they would receive their Komsomol

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[40]A. Iovlev, "Sovershenstvovanie voenno-uchebnykh zavedenii v 1921-1928 gg.," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal 2 (1976):96-97.

[41]V. Dement'ev, "Deiatel'nost' KPSS po sozdaniiu i organizatsionnomy ukrepleniiu armeiskogo komsomola," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal 7 (1968):4.

card, and in the military Party organization.[42] This was a change from 1921 when the Party refused to allow the systematic entrance of Komsomolites into the ranks of the Party. It appears that their successful indoctrination and supervision mandated such a move.

The February resolution further stipulated that Komsomol members were obliged to attend open Party meetings and to fulfil Party decisions, but were to receive only the right to a deliberative vote. Control of the Komsomol's growth in the military was also the Party's prerogative as it was able to decide on the entrance to and exclusion from the Komsomol without having to confer with local Komsomol authorities.[43] After consultation with local Komsomol committees a Party member was chosen to organize the work of the Komsomol members in military units. The coordinator was responsible for the administration and fulfilment of Komsomol activities and duties. Constant supervision by Party functionaries would help guarantee the political reliability of Komsomol members, who, in general, were recruited from the peasantry and had received, in relation to their counterparts in military educational institutions, minimal political education.

To raise the political level of Komsomol recruits Party workers forced them to attend political education classes and discussions, and to spend time in the divisional library reading books on Marx and Lenin. By late 1923 the political curriculum

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[42]Petrov, Partiinoe stroitel'stvo, 247-248.

[43]V.G. Kurgan, Voprosy partiinoi i komsomol'skoi raboty v sovetskoi armii i voenno-morskom flote (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1965), 142.

also included anti-Trotsky propaganda which was intended to unseat the founder of the Red Army from his base of support in the military.[44] Although the political indoctrination of recruits was comprehensive, it was a never ending process as the Komsomol ranks were continually replenished with new members. By 1924 the number of Komsomolites in the military rose to over 30,000, all of whom, in accordance with the February 1923 resolution, were obliged to enter military Party organs.

The rapid influx of raw recruits could not but have a detrimental effect on both their training and on the political elitism of military Party organs. A purge of the Komsomol members from Party organs would solve the latter problem. Simply removing Komsomol members from Party organs would, however, be a return to the situation in 1921, which was unworkable given the rapid growth of Komsomol members. The Party, therefore, decided on a compromise solution: Komsomol members would be eliminated from Party lists and allowed to form special groups which would facilitate Komsomol training but would be totally under the control of the Party.

The first step in this direction came in mid-1924 at a Party conference of the Leningrad Military District. The conference members concluded that Party military cells did not devote suffi-

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[44]Petrov, Partiinoe stroitel'stvo, 161. At the 10th Party Congress in March 1921 a heated debate erupted between Commissar of War Trotsky and M.V. Frunze, who became Chief of Staff of the Red Army in March 1924 and People's Commissar for Military Affairs in January 1925, over their opposing military doctrines. With the approval of Stalin a purge of Trotsky supporters, many of whom were political commissars and military specialists, was begun in the military at the start of 1924 and succeeded in removing Trotsky from his position on January 17, 1925.

cient attention to the work of Komsomol members in the military and that the existing organizational structure for Komsomol members in the military had become outdated. This conclusion was supported by the Party conferences in the Northern Caucasus and Siberian Military Districts.[45] On the advice of these conferences the Party Central Committee decided upon the creation of Komsomol "groups assisting the Party" in August 1924.

The framework of these groups was worked out by the Party after consultations with the Military Political Administration. Komsomol members would be dropped from Party lists and obliged to enter these groups, which would not be permitted their own elected organs and had to work under strict Party leadership.[46] This move to restrict the access of Komsomol members into the Party was further entrenched in May 1925 when the Military Political Administration, together with the Komsomol Central Committee, decided that the upper age limit on Komsomol membership be raised from 23 to 24 years old.[47] During this extra year in the ranks of the Komsomol, members could receive additional political training, thereby becoming better suited for entrance into the Party. This move came at a crucial time since by July 1925 there were more than 78,400 Komsomolites in the army and navy, which was more than twice the number of the previous year as well as more than the number of

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[45]Ibid., 248.

[46]M.S. Leonov, Partiino-politicheskaia rabota v sovetskikh vooruzhennykh silakh (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1972), 83.

[47]Petrov, Partiinoe stroitel'stvo, 250.

Party members.[48]

In July 1925 the Military Political Administration and the Komsomol Central Committee further outlined the organization of the Komsomol groups. Their first point was that military Party organs had unconditional leadership over these bodies. Komsomol members were still required to participate in Party meetings, work and fulfil all Party decisions, including all political education and enlightenment classes and programs, and the daily work of the cell was arranged by a Komsomol organizer and a Party member. Also, although entrance and exclusion from the groups could be discussed at a group meeting, membership had to be first approved by the Party organs before it was conferred. Finally, those members who wished to enter the Party following their term in the Komsomol had to be accepted by a Party commission and the local Komsomol committee. Since all these stipulations, except the last one, were required of Komsomolites when they were candidate members of the Party, the formation of "groups assisting the Party" had effectively cleansed the Party of Komsomol members while still maintaining strict Party control over them.

The formation of these groups did, however, allow for the augmentation of Komsomol autonomy in the military. Komsomol groups were now required to coordinate their work with local Komsomol organizations, a move which would promote greater unity of Komsomol members both inside and outside the military. Furthermore, Komsomolites were instructed to agitate among non-party youths and

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[48]Ibid., 252.

to encourage them to become involved in the political activities of the unit.[49] Although these gains were very minor, and pale in comparison to the freedom allowed Komsomol members in military educational institutions, they were a first step towards the creation of Komsomol cells in military units in 1930.

It is clear that the creation of Komsomol groups in the military was the result not of dedication to the Party and state on the part of Komsomolites, nor of their valour during the Civil War, but of the Party's efforts to purge its ranks of politically unreliable elements. The desire for complete political control is clearly illustrated in a comparison of the Party's treatment of Komsomolites in military units and educational institutions. While the political and agitational work was the same in both areas, the Party allowed the creation of Komsomol cells only in educational institutions because it was assured that total control over these politically more mature members could be maintained. Also, since the Komsomol's role in the military did not dramatically change from its 1921 patronage duties, it is clear that it was only the eradication of the rapidly growing Komsomol members from the Party which inspired the extension of the Komsomol's autonomy in 1924.

This continued friction between Komsomol members, who were rapidly becoming the bulk of the Soviet military and were aspiring for greater independence, and the Party, which viewed the situation in the military only with its narrow interest of total control,

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[49]P.N. Sharpilo ed., KPSS o vooruzhennykh silakh sovetskogo soiuza dokumenty 1917-1968 (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1969), 234-238.

could only lead to future problems. Furthermore, the interrelationship between the military and society would mean that the effects of a disgruntled military would reverberate in society as a whole, a scenario which would not bode well for the Party. To manage these problems the Party would either have to dismantle completely its system of repression or else further restrict individual liberties in both the civilian and military spheres of Soviet society. In the forthcoming chapters it will become apparent that in industry and agriculture the Soviet government adopted the latter choice.

3
To Victory in Socialist Industrialization

At the start of the First Five-Year Plan in 1928 Soviet society was predominantly rural, technologically backward, and antagonistic to any form of change which originated in the city. This situation doomed the Soviet Union to obscurity among the world's industrial powers and threatened the authority of the urban based Russian Communist Party which adhered to the Marxist view that it was impossible to build socialism in an agricultural society. Industrialization of the USSR would be an answer to both of these problems.[1] It would elevate the Soviet Union to an economic and technical level comparable to the West, and at the same time would accelerate the pace of change in the countryside, through the forced collectivization of agriculture. Soviet industrial programs, therefore, would dramatically alter the economic, political, and social makeup of the USSR.

To assure the success of these plans the Party mobilized the membership of the Komsomol. In all fields of industry the Party required Komsomol members to promote Soviet industrial policies and to fulfil the goals of the Five-Year Plan in four years. To accomplish this difficult task Komsomol members centred their attention on attempts to rationalize (a Soviet catch-word for

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[1]For an excellent analysis of the industrialization debate among the Soviet leadership in the 1920s see Alec Nove's An Economic History of the USSR (London: Penguin Books, 1969), 109-125.

streamline or modernize) industry. The success of their work would greatly facilitate the plans of the Party Central Committee to restructure the Soviet Union.

An examination of the duties of Komsomol members in factories will shed light both on the nature of the Komsomol's role in industry and on the dramatic impact of the industrialization program itself. This can be accomplished by a thorough analysis of a March 1930 Komsomol Central Committee document entitled "The Situation of VLKSM Committees at Industrial Enterprises".[2] This report outlines in great detail the work of Komsomol cells in factory shops, Machine-Tractor Stations and industrial transport facilities, and mines; essentially everywhere Komsomol cells were established in the Soviet industrial network. This document, therefore, is more than sufficient to reveal the important position of Komsomol cells in industry.

The Soviet leadership also perceived the importance of young Komsomol workers at industrial sites. Due to its preference for the working class, the Party treated Komsomolites at industrial enterprises as the most trustworthy and faithful of the entire membership of the organization. Although this resulted in urban Komsomol members receiving an additional leadership role vis-a-vis all other members, it also meant that they were carefully selected and closely monitored by both the Party and by their superiors in the Komsomol.

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[2]M. Minailov ed., Pervichnaia komsomol'skaia organizatsiia (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1972), 71-79.

According to the 1930 Komsomol Central Committee document, potential members of factory Komsomol cells had to have their social status, their role in social-political work, and their knowledge of the regulations and program of the Komsomol carefully screened by the cell's organizational committee.[3] This regulation was intended to control the social makeup of factory Komsomol cells and ensure that their membership would be socially and politically acceptable to the Party political organs. With this order in place the Party believed that its orders would be explicitly followed.

Further control of factory Komsomol cells by the Party was accomplished through the stipulation that "the committee secretary must be a member of the All-Russian Communist Party (b)", and through the practice of allowing local Party committees tight control over Komsomol factory committees.[4] The ability to completely manipulate the social composition and administrative apparatus of factory Komsomol cells was imperative to the program of central planning, the dominant feature of the Soviet economy which assured the government complete control over the economic resources of the state. The Komsomol's duties in industry therefore closely reflected the political, social, and economic aspirations of the Party.

These duties, as outlined in the Komsomol Central Committee document, were divided into twelve specific fields: organizational structural work; industrial work; economic work; preparation of

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[3]Ibid., 77.

[4]Ibid., 72.

cadres; agitation and mass campaigns; cultural work in everyday life; propaganda; work regarding the media; international education; soviet-cooperative work; military-physical educational work; and village work.[5] The successful performance of work in each field would, it was maintained, greatly contribute to the success of the Soviet industrial program. Because of the importance and complexity of the program's numerous features, a comprehensive examination of each individual field is necessary.

The duties assigned to the field of "organizational structural work" were the fulfilment of committee decisions; the promotion and regulation of the organization's growth; the support of self-criticism;[6] and the defence of "inter-union democracy".[7] It is apparent that all of these measures were designed to facilitate control of the cell by higher authorities. Both self-criticism and inter-union democracy would contribute to the docility of members and would encourage them to fulfil the tasks put before them. The Party leadership believed that the regulation of membership would guarantee that only those who were willing to follow orders would be admitted to the cell. Positioning these orders before all

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[5]Ibid., 73-75.

[6]The policy of criticism-self-criticism encouraged members to evaluate their actions and performance and do the same for fellow members, including those in positions of authority. It was hoped that this policy would result in the over-performance of duty, as members would become fearful of being publicly criticized and punished.

[7]In essence, inter-union democracy was the ability of Komsomol members to voice their opinion on any issue so long as they did not oppose a recognized policy of the organization and thereby contravene the policy of democratic centralism.

others clearly illustrates that the prime concern of the Komsomol Central Committee was the maintenance of strict control over its cells. Such measures would be necessary to stifle personal initiative and to foster subordination to the demands of superiors.

Under the description of "industrial work" Komsomol members were required to attract young workers to the social life of the industry; to promote socialist competitions (see below); to aid the rationalization movement; to enhance the achievements of udarnik (shock worker) brigades (see below); and to organize and preach industrial propaganda. These five specific tasks proved to encompass a large part of the Komsomol's work in Soviet industrial enterprises. Since the features encompassed in each of this field's points are intricate, a step by step analysis is required.

The socialization of young workers, many of whom had been raised in the countryside and were hostile to the regime,[8] for factory life was a very arduous task. One of the first steps in this transformation was the practice of preaching anti-religious propaganda to youths, after which they would be indoctrinated in the teachings of communism. This attack on religion not only advanced the political, social, and ideological aims of the Party, it also aided the planned social transformation of the countryside

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[8]Donald Filtzer, Soviet Workers and Stalinist Industrialization (London: Pluto Press, 1986), 80. The hostility towards the regime which peasant workers brought with them from the countryside grew substantially with the advent of the collectivization campaign. Refer to chapter 4 for more information on collectivization.

where religious beliefs were still prevalent.[9] This dual purpose role appropriately reflected the changes which Komsomolites were simultaneously nurturing in both the urban and rural environments.

In spite of the devout work of many Komsomol members and widespread youthful enthusiasm, disillusionment with life in industrial centres was apparent. At some of the new industrial enterprises in Central and Eastern Russia, such as Magnitogorsk and Uralmash, Komsomol members often "lived under canvases, in shelters made of branches, in dugouts or hastily constructed barracks, and did not always [have] sufficient goods, or the most necessary clothing."[10] These poor conditions at times led to a loss of discipline, to absenteeism, and to alcoholism, all of which contributed to a general lowering of productivity. To fight this trend Komsomol members promulgated patriotic slogans, conducted "comradely talks" or exposed offenders in "comrade courts",[11] often revealing their behaviour to the public by means of slogans and placards, and treated the affliction of alcoholism by forming emergency health brigades.[12] These and other duties, which fell under the heading of industrial propaganda, will be further examined shortly.

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[9]The importance of the anti-religious education of youths was prominently featured on the pages of Komsomol'skaia pravda. For example see the April 11, 1928, and January 1, 1929, issues.

[10]L.S. Ozerov, "Komsomol na novostroikakh dovoennykh piatiletok," Voprosy istorii 12 (1958):133.

[11]At these staged exhibitions Komsomolites would be judged by their peers in the presence of fellow members with the main purpose being the promotion of discipline.

[12]Ozerov, 139.

Another means of stimulating the productivity of young workers was the state-wide policy of socialist competitions. The precursor to this movement was the practice of various factories to "challenge" each other to contests, the goal of which was the achievement of the highest production quota.[13] From this base, and following Pravda's publication in 1929 of Lenin's article "How to Organize Competitions", the policy of socialist competitions was adopted. Under pressure from the Party, workers, shops, factories, and even regions would "challenge" one another in order to achieve the most efficient production result. The aim of socialist competitions was described as follows:

> to raise industrial labour and improve the quality of finished products, to eliminate absences and lateness, to promote the careful use of instruments and machine-tools, to attract youth to social work, to interest them in the raising of their qualifications, and to unmask youths who exploit administrative-social work.[14]

At an All-Union review of industry which was held in Moscow from November 1928 to February 1929 the Party announced that socialist competitions were popular among Komsomol members.[15] A 1930 report that 94 percent of the Komsomol members in the Stalingrad Tractor Factory participated in a competition which eliminated their days off and increased their work day to ten or

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[13]Kamshalov, 447. For an analysis of the phenomenon of socialist competitions see Lewis Siegelbaum, Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935-1941 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 40-53.

[14]Vel'mitskii, 31.

[15]Pastukhov, 207.

more hours was later used to support this claim.[16] This figure, and similar ones, may have been attainable since it was common practice for the Party to coerce Komsomol members to participate in competitions.

One such method was the severe punishment of reluctant Komsomolites by the Komsomol Central Committee. Regular workers, many of whom resented the rise in production and subsequently did not wish to take part in competitions, were similarly coerced by the Party to participate in competitions. To pressure them to participate, the Party allowed factory managers, who wanted to receive financial bonuses, to raise unilaterally the production quota for the factory.[17] As a result, when the Party awarded the Komsomol the Red Banner of Labour in 1931 for its promotion of socialist competitions, the importance of this phenomenon to the Soviet leadership and the efforts it would employ to force Komsomol members to participate becomes clear.

Without the implementation of socialist competitions, and the captive labour which it guaranteed, it would have been very difficult for the Komsomol to promote the rationalization of industry. Making industry more efficient was also the job of specially established Komsomol rationalization brigades, groups, and buros. The role of these groups was to monitor the work rates at different factories and suggest ways in which efficiency could

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[16]Ozerov, 143.

[17]Filtzer, 70. The fear of receiving a reduced salary or fewer ration coupons pressured all workers to "volunteer" for work in socialist competitions.

be improved. Further efforts to promote rationalization were described in a December 1929 Komsomol Central Committee resolution. This document states that the improvement of industrial efficiency rests upon workers upgrading their technical skills by attending state sponsored courses, and upon the promotion of the udarnik movement.[18] The success of these rationalization measures would depend upon the commitment of young Soviet workers. While some were entirely disinterested in promoting Soviet industrialization, others were truly dedicated to the construction of socialism. These mixed feelings were evident among Komsomol members in the udarnik movement.[19]

From its meagre beginnings in June 1928 at the Leningrad factory "Ravenstvo", Komsomol involvement in the udarnik movement proved to be the organization's biggest endeavour during the First Five-Year Plan. The Party, believing that udarnik brigades increased worker productivity, supported the Komsomol's role in the movement. On January 16, 1929, the Central Committee member V. Kubishev wrote in Komsomol'skaia pravda that:

> Recently in the industrial centres (Donbass, Moscow, Leningrad, and the Urals) on the initiative of the Komsomol, udarnik industrial brigades of young workers have been organized, giving themselves the tasks of carrying out the rationalization measures at industrial enterprises. The experience of the work of the aforementioned brigades has

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[18]Kolosov, 443. E.H Carr and R.W. Davies in Foundations of a Planned Economy 1926-1929 (London: Macmillan, 1969), 1:413-415 describe how the acceptance of new technology would help the USSR become self-sufficient.

[19]Filtzer, 76. Siegelbaum, who analyzes the udarnik movement in his first chapter, also points out that many workers performed their duties admirably. Siegelbaum, 43.

> shown that they have substantially aided in the improvement and the acceleration of the industrial process, lowered costs, tightened-up time schedules, and settled other important social questions.[20]

With the complete support of the Party the udarnik movement flourished. Just one year after their appearance udarnik brigades were able to convene, on the initiative of the Komsomol, the first All-Union congress of udarnik brigades in Moscow from December 5 to 10, 1929.

The Komsomol's role in the udarnik movement was always very significant. In March 1930 it was calculated that of the 794,600 Komsomol members who worked in various fields of Soviet industry, 353,600 (44.5%) worked in udarnik brigades.[21] By the end of the year, mostly due to ten All-union Komsomol mobilizations between July 1929 and July 1930, participation rose to 70 percent. It is clear that participation in the udarnik movement was a prime concern for the Komsomol leadership.

The Komsomol's leading role in udarnik brigades was solidified in December 1929 when the Komsomol Central Committee, with the approval of the Party, declared that the organization would become patron to the movement. This honour was taken seriously by the Komsomol leadership. Members who wished to join the movement were required to follow, beyond the conditions as Komsomolites, additional stipulations. It was necessary for them to serve in the movement for no less than two years; to have proletarian social

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[20]Ozerov, 142.

[21]Pastukhov, 210.

origins and attitude; to participate in industrial conferences; and to maintain a high standard of labour discipline.[22] Since one of the principal roles of the udarnik movement was to lead by example, these further provisions were deemed necessary in order to retain the integrity of the program.

Udarnik brigades were also given other tasks to perform. They had to "fight for the increase of industrial labour, and for the high quality of production,"[23] as well as support socialist competitions by challenging the production quotas of other brigades; encourage members to unceasingly work on Saturdays and Sundays and "volunteer" others workers to do the same; obtain valuable materials needed by the factory; and monitor the quality of products.[24] Brigades were influential in establishing control points from which they could supervise the transportation of goods as well as prevent theft and sabotage at industrial centres.[25] It is apparent that besides being multifarious, brigade work was also very intensive and time consuming. In order to encourage the

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[22]Ibid., 216.

[23]Vel'mitskii, 33.

[24]Donald Filtzer describes how the industrial output of Soviet enterprises was set by the work of udarnik, and not regular, work brigades. Filtzer, 71.

[25]When machinery broke down or production did not meet the required quotas the Soviet government never admitted that there may exist a failure in the socialist system. Instead, they blamed the misfortunes on the work of "saboteurs" who were part of antagonistic social classes. Also, as the industrialization drive demanded faster production, many udarniki were themselves responsible for breaking machinery through overuse and carelessness thereby causing work stoppages. Filtzer, 74.

participation of Komsomolites in the movement the Party offered them monetary incentives, better food and accommodations, and the privilege of an increase in power and authority.[26]

This prerogative was confirmed in an order by the Komsomol Central Committee on January 21, 1932. The document stated that Komsomol members in the udarnik movement were permitted to run for election by a general meeting of young workers to the position of youth labour inspector at a state industrial site.[27] Since this privilege was not offered to other Komsomolites, the incentive to enter the movement was obvious. Inspectors were charged with the serious duty of ensuring that young workers followed the directives, laws, and orders of the local state organs. This was quite an important task, especially since there were only one to three inspectors at each factory, and they were allowed almost total freedom of movement. Such power was easily and often abused, causing workers to resent Komsomol udarnik members.[28]

Returning to an analysis of the twelve areas of Komsomol work, in the field of "industrial work" the Komsomol was responsible for furthering discipline and high productivity as well as for

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[26]For a more comprehensive list of incentives given to udarnik workers see Siegelbaum, 44; 50.

[27]B. Myshenkov ed., Komsomol i podrostki (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1971), 46.

[28]The increase in production norms initiated by the Komsomol fostered hostility to them from average workers and even from fellow Komsomol members, some of whom resorted to killing both udarniki and management. Filtzer, 77-79.

preaching Marxist-Leninist theories.[29] At industrial sites where peasants, who were unfamiliar with communist teachings, constituted the majority of the workforce the successful performance of this duty was critical. Under orders from the Komsomol Central Committee qualified propagandists were sent to various industrial enterprises in order to form "propaganda brigades."[30] They were responsible for administering Party approved literature and conducting Party propaganda, which included the aforementioned anti-religious work. Because of the sensitive and precarious nature of this function, Komsomol agitators were always closely monitored and controlled by Party members.

Under the heading of "economic work", the Komsomol was responsible for coordinating its work with, and attracting members to, industrial unions, as well as being dedicated to the defence of the economic interests of youths. This requirement was crucial to the efficient operation of the factory as it was necessary for both young and old to work in harmony. In circumstances where older workers had a better education or were more aware of the most efficient forms of production, Komsomolites would organize meetings at which these workers were asked to train their younger counterparts.[31] The Soviet leadership hoped that cooperation between Komsomol members and senior workers would contribute to the equal treatment of all workers, regardless of age. In many cases this

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[29]Ozerov, 139.

[30]Ibid., 140.

[31]Ibid., 148.

did not occur and, due to the inability to socialize and atomize workers, numerous strikes resulted at several industrial enterprises. Efforts by the regime to foster tranquility in factory shops, which would benefit the industrial output of the factory and aid the socialization of young workers, were overshadowed by the continued friction between young and old workers.[32]

"The preparation of cadres" was a field of work which enlisted the Komsomol in the organization of schools for factory and plant apprenticeships (FZU), the purpose of which was the improvement of the workers' technical qualifications. FZU schools were designed not "to prepare masters and young technical personnel in general, but only conscious, literate, technically qualified workers."[33] Since this would result in raising the general education of the workers, this program would have a dramatic impact on the more underdeveloped areas of the country where basic education was rare. Consequently, the school network would have an important role to play in uniting the disparate parts of the Soviet Union and in strengthening the country's national fabric.

FZU classes, which were offered during the day and in the evening, were designed to relate the theoretical program of the classroom with the work in the factory shop. Besides teaching discipline, work in brigades and by oneself, and rationalization procedures, schools also served the function of vehicles for the transmission of political propaganda. Political education courses

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[32]Filtzer, 116; 81-87.

[33]Kolosov, 231.

were established with varying topics such as the History of materialism, of the Komsomol, and of the Russian Communist Party (b); political-economy; the international youth movement, and the works of Lenin. When they were first established in the mid-1920s FZU schools were organized on a two year program, but as the system was augmented in 1933 it was changed into a seven year program.[34] Established on a nation-wide basis the FZU network was able to reach vast numbers of youths. Between 1926 and 1932 the number of schools grew from 21 to 270.[35] Controlled by the Party through the Central Institute of Labour and by the state organs for industrial education, political indoctrination and industrial education were harmoniously synthesized.

Closely affiliated to the FZU network were groups calling for the "scientific organization of labour". SOL groups, which were established to improve working conditions, raise the educational level of workers, and to streamline the industrial process, travelled to various factories and promoted the reorganization of labour based upon modern scientific methods. When the work of SOL groups showed some promising results Komsomol members encouraged

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[34]V.V. Mel'nikov, "Leninskii komsomol - pomoshchnik partii v podgotovke kadrov massovykh professii dlia promyshlennosti i sel'skogo khoziaistva (1927-1936 gg.)," in B. Nikiforov ed., Pozyvnye istorii vypusk chetyryi (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1975), 54. See also Siegelbaum, 21-22.

[35]P.M. Mikhailov, "Rol' VLKSM v podgotovke kadrov proizvodstvenno-tekhnicheskoi intelligentsii (1928-1936 gg.)," in Nikiforov ed., vypusk chetyryi, 78.

other workers to join the movement.[36] Although these groups never attained the importance which was attributed to FZU schools, they did succeed in raising the technical level of workers.[37]

Returning once again to an examination of the twelve general areas of Komsomol work, in the four fields of "agitation and mass campaigns", "propaganda", "cultural work", and "work regarding the media", Komsomolites were required to perform many similar and inter-related tasks. By following the common mandates in these four fields Komsomol members were constantly engaged in the agitation and propaganda work of their cells. Having been mentioned twice previously, in relation to "organizational structural work" and industrial work", the propaganda work of Komsomolites was obviously highly valued by the Party.

To fulfil this further agitational burden Komsomolites were required to lead in the work of political schools and circles; to attract Komsomol members to the Party network of political enlightenment; and to organize clubs, films, and excursions to occupy workers during their rest periods. Komsomol members also worked in factory libraries, distributing books, papers, and journals to young workers. To facilitate this task the Party

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[36]Yu.V. Voskresenskii, Perekhod kommunisticheskoi partii k osushchesvleniiu politiki sotsialisticheskoi industrializatsii SSSR 1925-1927 (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo moskovskogo universiteta, 1969), 309.

[37]Vel'mitskii, 31-32. The Komsomol was also involved in establishing three other forms of technical educational facilities: schools for workers in mass professions; schools for the preparation of workers of middle qualification; and schools for highly qualified workers such as brigade leaders and fitters. Mel'nikov, 54.

allowed the Komsomol to become the patron of wall newspapers (stengazety) and to edit the articles dealing with young workers in local and factory newspapers. To this end, the Komsomol created operation groups which collected information on the work of Komsomolites in various factories and "announced on the walls of buildings and in the canteen the inadequate"[38] performance of specific workers as well as praised those who over-fulfilled their duties.

Since, as has been previously noted, this propaganda work had to conform to precepts laid down by the Party, it is no surprise that "the majority of propagandists in the Komsomol network of political enlightenment were communists."[39] Political education served the purpose of co-opting workers to support the Soviet regime and more importantly prepared them to support Stalin in his fight for complete control of the Party in the late 1920s.[40] It is most likely due to this latter reason that political indoctrination was so incessant and thorough. With the Party-line changing as rapidly as political events unfolded in the Kremlin, a constant modification of political slogans and the subsequent reeducation of workers was necessary.

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[38]Ozerov, 134.

[39]Ibid., 140.

[40]In his bid for complete control of the Party Stalin attacked his rival Nikolai Bukharin by labelling him the leader of a "Right Deviationist" group. He also continued to malign Leon Trotsky, now in exile, who was labelled the leader of a "Left Deviationist" faction. Consequently, both Bukharin's and Trotsky's political and social policies were repeatedly attacked in the Soviet press. See the front page of Komsomol'skaia pravda on January 3, 1930.

In the field of "international education", Komsomol members were instructed to promote revolutionary competitions, to strengthen their contacts with foreign unions, and to organize classes on international languages for young workers. The suspicion and antipathy towards contact with foreigners which was prevalent in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 30s makes it hard to believe that these requirements were wholeheartedly promoted. Although workers were informed daily about international issues the information they received was highly censored and designed to advance the policies of the Soviet leadership.[41] In order to retain this monopoly on information the Party could not allow workers to build solid relationships with foreign workers.

The fear of eventual conflict with the capitalist West did prove instrumental, however, in the formation of a movement which was designed to help the Soviet Union "overtake and surpass" (dognat' i peregnat') Western industrial output. On the initiative of the Komsomol, DIP brigades were formed at the Kozitsky factory in Leningrad in the early 1930s.[42] By mid-1932 the movement had expanded across the country to include 296 brigades. Their aim was to clarify for the workers the pressing need for the Soviet Union to succeed in the industrialization campaign so as to become economically independent of capitalist countries. Although DIP

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[41]The front page on most issues of Komsomol'skaia pravda was devoted to international issues. Articles usually portrayed Germany, Britain, France, and the United States in the worst possible light, while the Soviet Union's role in international affairs was incessantly praised.

[42]Pastukhov, 213. See also Siegelbaum, 49.

brigades had a minor influence in comparison to their udarnik counterparts, the movement is a good example of how the Party combined political propaganda with the promotion of economic goals.

In the field of "Soviet-cooperative work" the Komsomol was charged with improving the work of the state apparatus, participating in the activities of city and factory soviets, overcoming bureaucratic impasses with the aid of Light Cavalry brigades (see below), and encouraging youths to help in state programs. To fulfil these requirements Komsomol members regularly participated in Party-led industrial meetings at factories and in the community. Once again Komsomolites were asked to help improve the quantity and quality of products in shops, lower the prices of goods, eliminate deficits, and observe the conduct of workers.[43] While coordination with Party organs might help to eliminate bureaucracy, the real reason for this directive was the control of Komsomol work by Party members.

By far the largest effort to fight bureaucracy which involved the Komsomol was its participation in Light Cavalry brigades. In a letter to all Komsomol cells, which was dated October 10, 1928, the Komsomol Central Committee explained the work of the Light Cavalry. The document stated that the "fundamental task of the Light Cavalry is the decisive struggle with bureaucratism, and with the stagnant apparat which has neglected the needs of workers."[44]

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[43]I.P. Ostapenko and Yu.V. Voskresenskii, "Iz istorii proizvodstvennykh soveshchanii v promyshlennosti SSSR (1926-1932 gg.)," Voprosy istorii 6 (1958):23.

[44]Minailov, 70.

In order to counter these alleged defects brigades would be formed at factories on a volunteer basis from workers in the Party and the Komsomol. Acting upon the complaints of workers and visitors to industrial enterprises, brigades would appear unexpectedly in order to confront the factory administration with the charges as well as to verify storage materials at storehouses, and to check the status of office work.[45] By 1930 over 250,000 Komsomol members were participating in the Light Cavalry movement, which operated in both the city and countryside.[46]

An attack on the bureaucracy which plagued the Soviet system was a necessary measure if the desire to rationalize industry was to be realized. Consequently, the government fully supported the raids of the Light Cavalry. By assigning press and radio liaisons to the brigades the government hoped to intimidate industrial administrators with the fear that their incompetent management would be reported nation-wide.[47] The inconsistencies in the Soviet economy, however, were too numerous to overcome and so the work of the Light Cavalry, while noble, was in the long run ineffective.

In the field of "military-physical education work" Komsomol members were required to promote ties with sponsoring military

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[45]V.A. Sulemova ed., Istoriia VLKSM i vsesoiuznoi pionerskoi organizatsii imeni V.I. Lenina (Moscow: Prosveshchanie, 1978), 148.

[46]Ibid.

[47]S.V. Kul'chitskii, Vnutrennie resursy sotsialisticheskoi industrializatsii SSSR (1926-1937) (Kiev: Naukova dumka, 1979), 80. The pages of Komsomol'skaia pravda were full of reports detailing Light Cavalry raids. For example see the July 9 and June 29, 1928, issues.

units, and to encourage members to enter military educational institutions. By persuading members to socialize and work with military recruits the Komsomol would facilitate the Party's attempts to control the military as well as help in the militarization of Soviet society, a subject which was dealt with in the previous chapter.[48] Both of these measures would ensure that Party leadership of the Soviet Union would remain unchallenged.

The final field to be examined, "village work", stipulated that Komsomol members in factories were required to improve the links between the city and the village, and to participate in the work of Komsomol cells in the countryside. Young workers were ordered to travel to villages and act as instructors and leaders of work groups as well as occupy positions of authority in village Komsomol cells.[49] Because the Party, with some justification, held the theoretical view that only the urban workers were their faithful supporters, the work of the village cells was deemed to be politically inadequate. Control of village Komsomol cells by urban members would hence rectify this situation.

The drive for control of village cells by urban Komsomol members was begun in June 1925 at the Fourth All-Union Komsomol Conference. At that time it was resolved that:

Noting the weak performance of patronage work and the confused

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[48]Overbearing phrases, such as "storming production limits" and "attacking the stagnant bureaucracy", were used to connote the image that industrialization was a military campaign. See Mehnert, 68, as well as front page of Komsomol'skaia pravda on March 18, 1930.

[49]Pastukhov, 227.

> help offered in the cultural field by village cells, vis-a-vis the work of their urban counterparts, the conference brings to the attention of all city RLKSM organizations the vital task of enlivening the patronage role in the countryside and showing real cultural help to village cells...[50]

Since it was the Party which demanded control of village cells by urban members, the Party led the transfer of Komsomol members from factories to the villages.[51] Control over the selection and assignment of members was an important prerogative which would guarantee that the Party line would be followed.

This dramatic transfer of members also meant that the experiences of the urban environment, the most notable of which were the discipline and regimentation demanded in an industrial enterprise, would be implanted in the rural atmosphere. It has already been noted how the Light Cavalry movement was relocated to the countryside. The further saturation of the countryside with industrial workers would then ensure that village life would be forever transformed through industrialization and mechanization. As these were two of the Party's goals in the subsequent collectivization campaign, Komsomol members were greatly encouraged by Party organs to relocate to the countryside. The multifarious role of the Komsomol in the countryside will be the subject of the following chapter.

An analysis of these twelve fields clearly reveals that the rapid industrialization campaign in the Soviet Union relied greatly

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[50]Kolosov, 201.

[51]P.I. Kabanov ed., Ocherki istorii sovetskogo rabochego klassa (1917-1965 gg.) (Moscow: Prosveshchanie, 1966), 180.

upon the efforts of Komsomol members. While it is clear that the Party wanted Komsomol members to work faithfully in udarnik and Light Cavalry brigades, to attend FZU schools, to preach Party propaganda, and to promote socialist competitions, the performance of Komsomolites in these areas never matched the Party's rhetoric. For this, the Soviet leadership is partly to blame, as it stifled the initiative and independence of Komsomol workers the moment their efforts succeeded.[52] In reality, Soviet industrialization encouraged workers to favour quantity at the expense of quality and to falsify production figures, both of which disrupted the planned rate of production. In the end, these inconsistencies contributed to the failure of the First Five-Year Plan.[53]

The Soviet regime, however, did succeed in transforming the Soviet industrial base, as well as the entire social fabric of the USSR, along lines which were drawn by the Party. New industrial centres, albeit poorly constructed, arose across the country and the industrial resources of the USSR came under the control of the Party. The best example of this latter process was in the countryside, which is where this study will now turn.

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[52]Filtzer, 81.

[53]Naum Jasny, Soviet Industrialization (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), 67.

4
Towards the Complete Collectivization of Agriculture and the Social Transformation of the Countryside

In 1921, with the economy severely battered by the Civil War, the Soviet leadership, at Lenin's behest, implemented the New Economic Policy (NEP). In a staggering move which many in the Party's ruling circles considered a betrayal to communist teachings, the policy of War Communism was abandoned and the peasantry were encouraged to supply the starving country with food. Peasants, who had prospered from the Party's relaxed, almost market-based, economics, arose across the country and presented the Soviet leadership with a self-made ideological enemy. Events in the countryside were allowed to develop without any major obstructions on the part of the government since economic and political stability was more important to the Party than the doctrinaire implementation of Marxist teachings. The Party chose simply to promote political propaganda and indoctrination through education, efforts which seem almost half-hearted in the light of later campaigns.[1]

As the industrialization of the Soviet Union progressed after the First Five-Year Plan was announced in 1928, the laissez-faire policy towards the countryside was no longer appropriate. Complete economic and political control of the countryside by the Party, a

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[1]For information on the periods of War Communism and NEP see Nove, 37-108.

move which would satisfy communist stalwarts and could be justified as necessary for the success of industrialization, became the new platform of the Soviet leadership. Independent farming would be abolished and peasants were to be driven into huge agricultural communities called collective farms (kolkhozy), the future bastions of Soviet power in the countryside. The collectivization of agriculture would serve two fundamental purposes. Firstly, it would eradicate the ideological inconsistencies which had arisen due to NEP through the destruction of the peasantry's independence and through their forceful transformation into wage earners. This would be accomplished by fomenting class war in the countryside. Secondly, it would allow the Party complete control over the agricultural resources of the country. This was deemed necessary by the Party which feared that fluctuations in grain productivity would threaten the industrialization campaign. For these and other reasons the complete collectivization of agriculture was undertaken.[2]

In both the NEP and collectivization periods Komsomol members were mobilized to fulfil the Party's various goals in the countryside. Since these goals were dramatically altered in 1928 with the

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[2]Robert Stuart writes that "the collective farm was intended to provide, at one and the same time, a mechanism for political control in the countryside, and a mechanism for the extraction of an agricultural surplus". Stuart, The Collective Farm in Soviet Agriculture (Lexington Mass.: Lexington Books, 1972), 4. See also R.W. Davies, The Industrialization of Soviet Russia 1 (London: The Macmillan Press, 1980); Robert Conquest, The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1986); and Naum Jasny, The Socialized Agriculture of the USSR: Plans and Performance (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1949).

onset of the First Five-Year Plan, village Komsomol cells were accordingly reorganized to conform to their new tasks. Prior to the plan Komsomol cells were organized along the "territorial" principle, which dictated the establishment of a cell in an area incorporating sixteen to eighteen villages. By 1930, with collectivization well under way, cells conformed to the changing reality of rural life and were consequently established at collective farms along the "industrial" principle.[3]

In order to understand the significant role and impact of the Komsomol during the collectivization campaign it is necessary to examine this transformation from the territorial to the industrial principle. Once the duties of the Komsomol during the earlier period have been clarified, it will be possible to contrast the findings with the significantly different mandate given to the Komsomol by the Party during the First Five-Year Plan. Since this change in direction was a result of the Party's efforts to reshape the Soviet countryside, a comparison of the two periods will not only elucidate the nature of rural Komsomol cells, it will also shed light upon the character of Soviet collectivization.

To accomplish this task a methodological approach similar to the one in the previous chapter can be undertaken. The July 1924 document "The Regular tasks of RLKSM Work in the Countryside"[4], which was confirmed at the Sixth Komsomol Congress, outlines in

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[3]V.P. Sherstobitov, Istoriia krest'ianstva SSSR v piati tomakh. Tom II (Moscow: Nauka, 1986), 87.

[4]Minailov, 24-32.

detail the various duties which were required of rural Komsomol members in the 1920s. It divides Komsomol work into five distinct areas: social work; political enlightenment work; struggle for a new way of life; work among nationalities; and urban help for the countryside. Because of the comprehensive nature of this document, it will serve as a base from which an analysis can be undertaken of the Komsomol's position before the advent of the collectivization campaign.

In the area of "social work" Komsomol members were required to explain technical and legal issues to the peasants; fight illiteracy; and promote "izba[5] reading rooms". All these tasks were related to raising the educational levels of the peasants for the purpose of destroying their traditional way of life and mechanizing the countryside. If the Party could force peasants to adopt the mentality of industrial workers, who were the traditional supporters of the Bolsheviks, then they would be increasing their influence among the vast majority of the population. This planned transformation of rural life was hence crucial for the Party's political advancement.

Breaking the centuries-old traditions held by the peasants was, however, a very arduous task. One of the principal means of accomplishing this goal was through the promotion of different scientific-based methods of soil cultivation. Throughout the Soviet Union Komsomol members would distribute to the peasants

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[5]An "izba" was a traditional peasant hut, constructed from wooden logs and very poorly furnished.

different varieties of seed grain which were believed to have excellent growing potential. The Komsomol also tried to introduce directly to the peasantry wide row sowing machines and other types of agricultural machinery which would replace the antiquated wooden ploughs of the peasants and increase their agricultural output. Komsomolites further explained to the peasantry the benefits of multi-field cultivation and scientific crop rotation.[6] Most of these efforts, however, proved fruitless as the peasantry resisted the undesired changes.

In an effort to win the confidence of the peasantry and illustrate to them that their political and economic situation had risen dramatically since the October Revolution, Komsomol members attempted to educate peasants in the legal and administrative directives of the Soviet regime. When peasants approached Komsomol members with questions concerning Soviet laws Komsomolites would often write letters in the peasants' names to the appropriate government body to give the appearance that the regime was interested in the comments of its subjects. By reading from the 1923 Soviet Constitution and from Lenin's works on the necessity of giving land to the peasants Komsomolites were attempting to build among the peasants the illusion that the Soviet government was genuinely concerned with their well-being. Once again, peasants, with memories of War Communism fresh in their minds, were sceptical

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[6]E. Dubrovina ed., Leninsko-Stalinskii Komsomol (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1949), 72.

of the assertions made by Komsomol members.[7]

One claim which Komsomol members had no difficulty in proving was that the Soviet regime wanted to raise the literacy rate in the countryside. To this end the Komsomol was involved in the activities of the society "Down with Illiteracy!" (SDWI) and the network of Schools for Peasant Youths (SPY). Although both of these movements would improve the well-being of the peasantry, their primary role was to facilitate the political and economic restructuring measures of the Soviet government in the countryside.

On the orders of the Soviet government the SDWI movement was established in 1923. The influence of the Komsomol was always very noticeable, especially since in some regions where the society was active Komsomol members constituted over 50 percent of the society's membership.[8] To fulfil the task of eradicating illiteracy Komsomolites taught reading, writing, and basic grammar, they answered questions on science and technology, taught the History of the Komsomol, the Bolshevik Party, and October Revolution, and quoted from the Soviet constitution and law books.[9] A mixture of basic education and Party propaganda was noticeable, especially when topics such as Lenin and the peasantry and Marxist-Leninist theory formed the core of many lessons.

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[7]Nove, 103.

[8]S. Denisov, "Politiko-prosvetitel'naia rabota komsomola v derevne v gody vosstanovleniia narodnogo khoziaistva (1921-1925 gg.)," in B. Nikiforov ed., Pozyvnye istorii vypusk tretii (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1973), 135.

[9]Kolosov, 202.

Political education was very important among young peasant women, who were instructed that education and support of the Party would liberate them from work in the home and from male domination. This was closely affiliated to the anti-religious campaign which centred its attack on the fact that the Orthodox Church was male-dominated. By attacking the maternally-controlled peasant home and the Church the Party hoped that these measures would destroy the traditional fabric of the rural family and eliminate an important source of comfort in trying times. The destruction of these two reactionary bastions would thereby simplify the task of indoctrinating and controlling the countryside. Although these measures to elevate the role of women in society were unprecedented in a world which was hostile to the growing suffragette movement, the Party's purpose was entirely self-motivated.

The establishment by the Party of the SPY network in the early 1920s was similarly designed to further Bolshevik political and economic goals. This is evidenced in the three primary functions of the schools: to raise the educational level of the countryside in order to promote a technical revolution; to foster cooperation between the poor peasant masses for class warfare with richer peasants; and to raise the cultural level of the peasantry by teaching them the fundamentals of Leninism.[10] Political indoctrination, class conflict and mechanization of the countryside were hence the main functions of the extensive SPY network.

When the full-time schools were first organized the courses

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[10]Ibid., 146.

were based on a two and three year curriculum for youths between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. Since many youths are both inquisitive and rebellious at this stage in their lives the Party's attempts to indoctrinate them would be opportune. Indoctrination was accomplished through mandatory classes in political theory and obligatory participation in Party led political-enlightenment work. Since students were required to help implement Party directives in the villages and represent the Party among their fellow villagers, political indoctrination could not be lax.

Schools also taught many technically related subjects with the goal that all students would acquire a minimum of technical knowledge in various fields of study. Tractor driving and maintenance, bridge and road construction, and advanced planting and harvesting techniques were all important components of the school curricula. Studies were designed so that students could immediately apply their acquired knowledge to practical agricultural work. Consequently, students were obliged during the school year to take part in harvests and agricultural clubs and to assist specialists in their work.[11] By forcing students to apply the techniques which they learned the Party was attempting to ensure that rural industrialization, the principal goal of these classes, would be realized.

Education and political indoctrination were also the central purpose of the izba reading rooms. Usually located in each village, or affiliated with the Komsomol cell, reading rooms were

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[11]Ibid., 153.

filled with political journals and newspapers, such as the mouthpiece of the Communist Party, Pravda, Bednota (Poor Peasants), Krest'ianskaia gazeta (Peasant's Newspaper) and Komsomol'skaia pravda. The reading rooms were usually also supplied with a radio tuned to Party controlled stations, and with the works of Marx and Lenin. As the cultural centre of Soviet villages reading rooms would be used by Komsomol members for political and social meetings as well as technical lessons, and presentations of Party-approved movies and concerts.[12] By inextricably linking culture to political indoctrination the Party could saturate the peasants with its own propaganda under the auspices of raising the village's standard of living.

The tasks required of Komsomol members in the two fields of "political-enlightenment work" and the "struggle for a new way of life" were both very similar to the previous field of "social work". Komsomol members were instructed to promote political conversations and circles among the peasantry, ensuring that the Party's interpretation of Leninist theory was continually stressed. Komsomolites were also told to distribute throughout the villages under their jurisdiction both anti-religious and Party propaganda, much of which attempted to foster a stringent work ethic among the peasants.

The promotion of physical education, the discouragement of drunkenness, debauchery, and hooliganism, and the agitation to

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[12]O.I. Mitiaeva, Kommunisticheskaia partiia - rukovoditel' kulturnogo rosta krest'ianstva v gody kollektivizatsii (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo moskovskogo universiteta, 1978), 166.

"free young people, and especially young girls, from the influence of the family"[13] were all important components in the Komsomol's drive to create a new lifestyle for the peasants. This attempt to foster "socialist morality", unshakeable devotion to one's work and to the laws of the Soviet state, was a necessary step if the Party was to replace the traditional moral authorities, the family and the church, in the countryside.

To replace these institutions the Party had to convince the peasants that communist policies would be to their benefit. Consequently, in coordination with the village Soviet and other rural Party organs, the Komsomol conducted a campaign of raising the peasants' standard of living, especially in the more backward and nationally diverse parts of the country. In Central Asia the Komsomol was influential in dividing the land and livestock of former aristocrats, guaranteeing water to peasants through the construction of an irrigation system, and in the Transcaucasus they explained the federal nature of Soviet power to the peasants.[14] All of these measures were beneficial for the Party in its attempts to solidify its control over the far reaches of the country following the Civil War.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, by the mid-1920s the Komsomol was active in the relocation of industrial workers to the countryside. Trusted by the Party leadership, workers were placed in positions of authority, such as technical instructors, supervi-

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[13]Minailov, 30.

[14]Sulemova, 160.

sors of industrialization of the countryside, and agitators for the fulfilment of Party directives. Both village Komsomol cells and village life in general, however, were still firmly in the hands of local members, who distrusted the urban intruders.[15] Distrust of Komsomol members from the city led to evasion of the political measures which they advocated and ultimately to disregard of the Party. This situation could not be tolerated by Moscow, which consequently castigated the Komsomol for its unreliable performance of duty.

In 1925 the Komsomol Central Committee outlined what it considered to be some of the deficiencies with the operation of village Komsomol cells. The list of problems included: the improper screening of new members, including those who did not meet social requirements and those who failed their political tests; the insufficient promotion of educational and cultural work, especially among non-Party and poor peasant youths; the complete failure to preach anti-religious and socio-technical propaganda among the peasants; the reluctance to properly coordinate work between the village Party and Komsomol cells; and the refusal to create a Party core and allow urban youths a leading role in each village Komsomol cell.[16] The Komsomol had thus failed to fulfil its mandate of

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[15]Merle Fainsod describes how rural Party members did not cooperate with their urban counterparts in anti-kulak operations. Fainsod, Smolensk, 239-240. For information on the authority of the village commune in rural life see Lynne Viola, The Best Sons of the Fatherland Workers in the Vanguard of Soviet Collectivization (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 22.

[16]Kolosov, 191-192.

furthering the Party's control of village life. Although the complacency of village Komsomol members was not uniform throughout the country it was wide enough to warrant serious concern by the Party.

Party leaders have explained these deficiencies as the work of hostile "class elements" within the Komsomol cells. Although the malicious nature which Party propagandists attribute to these elements is grossly exaggerated and simply falls into line with the traditional Party conduct of blaming problems on invisible enemies, their point that village Komsomol cells were dominated by "class enemies" seems to be correct. At the start of 1925 the social composition of village Komsomol cells in the Soviet Union, although varying from region to region, was divided into six groups. There were 2.6% workers; 9.4% batraks; 57.8% bednyaks; 24% serednyaks; 3.7% white collar bureaucrats; and 2.5% other.[17] These figures illustrate that in the average village Komsomol cell the majority of members consisted of poor and middle peasants who, due to their better economic and educational position, usually controlled the village Komsomol cells. Although these groups had no desire to upset Komsomol plans in the countryside they also had no interest in promoting the directives which they received from the city.

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[17]Sherstobitov, Tom I, 309. Batraks were very poor hired farm labourers; bednyaks as poor peasants; and serednyaks as middle peasants. Together with kulaks, prosperous peasants who occasionally hired batrak labour, these four groups essentially formed the social hierarchy of the countryside. The division between these four groups was based upon whether a peasant owned one or more desiatiny (2.7 acres) of land. For a complete definition of this nomenclature, see Jasny, Socialized Agriculture, 162-163, and Davies, 23.

Consequently, the insufficiencies outlined by the Komsomol Central Committee may have been legitimate, but they were not caused by deliberate malice on the part of poor and middle peasants.[18]

The simple, dogmatic explanation of class enemies in the village Komsomol cells was, however, easier for Party officials to believe. But since NEP was still the official government economic policy no action was taken to change the composition of village Komsomol cells. Consequently, at the start of 1927 in the average Soviet village Komsomol cell there were 3.7% workers; 12.5% batraks; 41.9% bednyaks; 34.6% serednyaks; and 7.3% white collar members,[19] illustrating a significant increase in the poor and middle peasants as well as the white collar group. The economics of NEP were creating a polarization of successful and poor peasants in the countryside, with the prosperous rapidly becoming the dominant force in the village Komsomol cells.

Just as significant to the Party as the social makeup of village Komsomol cells was the simultaneous numerical growth of the Komsomol in the countryside. Between 1924 and 1926 rural Komsomol cells increased six fold so that by the start of 1927 there were over one and a half million rural Komsomol members.[20] Having four times as many members than the rural Party organs and often being responsible for fulfilling Party duties, village Komsomol cells were consequently the most omnipresent organization in the country-

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[18]Davies, 52-54.

[19]Sherstobitov, 394.

[20]Pastukhov, 189.

side.[21] When this information was combined with the fact that village Komsomol cells were controlled by people who according to their social status were potentially hostile to the Bolsheviks, a dramatic political and social transformation of rural Komsomol cells became an absolute necessity if the Party wanted to guarantee that its directives would be adequately fulfilled throughout the countryside.

This fundamental change in the village Komsomol cells would coincide with the grandiose political changes which the Soviet leadership had planned for the entire USSR. In December 1927 at the XV Party Congress, which has been labelled the "collectivization congress", the Party outlined its plan for the complete transformation of the countryside. Collective farms and machine tractor stations were to be established across the country as the focal points of rural industrialization. As the "faithful assistant" to the Party the Komsomol was instructed to help realize these plans. Consequently, at the XV Party Congress it was resolved that:

> Komsomol organizations in the countryside must work as the strong supporter of the Party in the elevation and collectivization of agriculture, in the development of a wide cultural initiative, and in the construction of new cadres of socialist workers.[22]

Since the Komsomol was charged with the fulfilment of the Party's new direction in the countryside, the political and ideological

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[21] Ibid.

[22] P.N. Fedoseeva ed., Kommunisticheskaia Partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza v rezoliutsiiakh i resheniiakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK (1898-1970). Tom IV (Moscow: Politizdat, 1970), 62.

inconsistencies which existed in village Komsomol cells could not be allowed to continue. The Party would have to force a dramatic change in the social composition of rural Komsomol cells.

At the Eighth Komsomol Congress from May 5 to 16, 1928, the Komsomol Central Committee, as was to be expected, concurred with the decisions of the XV Party Congress and likewise resolved that changes must be made to village Komsomol cells. At the Komsomol congress the Central Committee adopted the Party's position that a class war existed in the countryside between kulak and batrak peasants. In a plan to strengthen the batrak side Komsomol cells were instructed to increase the aid given to socialist elements in the countryside. Furthermore, by means of the "Resolution of Komsomol Work in the Countryside", the Central Committee instructed that the proletarian core in village Komsomol cells must occupy an unquestionable leadership position within the cell.[23] The purification program of village Komsomol cells therefore consisted of two related features: the augmentation of urban elements within the cell and the promotion of the poor peasantry at the expense of the rich.

To strengthen the proletarian core of the cells the Party and the Komsomol coordinated efforts to send thousands of young workers to the countryside.[24] This drive was unprecedented even in the

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[23]Kolosov, 378. Refer also to Fainsod, Smolensk, 238-239.

[24]A.S. Siluianov, "Shefskaia pomoshch rabochogo klassa derevne v podgotovke sotsialisticheskogo preobrazovaniia sel'skogo khoziaistva (1925-1929 gg.)," in G.V. Sharapov ed., Rol' rabochego klassa v sotsialisticheskom preobrazovanii derevni v SSSR (Moscow: Mysl', 1968), 40. According to Lynne Viola, the Party's decision

face of previous programs to augment the number of workers in rural Komsomol cells. Both organizations were, consequently, very determined to rectify the problems which they believed existed in village Komsomol cells. Since workers were chosen on the grounds of their political education and reliability they came to occupy the administrative positions in village Komsomol cells, which would henceforth follow the line dictated by the Party.

In order to eliminate groups which may have resisted, and would continue to resist, the leadership of the urban workers the Komsomol leadership planned to purge undesirable social elements from village Komsomol cells. This program began in late 1927 when 14,000 "dead souls", many of whom were from the serednyak peasant group, were ousted from the organization.[25] This measure would both rid the Komsomol of those who had obtained membership for opportunistic reasons and would encourage the remaining members to properly execute the directives they received from Moscow. The purge of socially undesirable Komsomol members was very thorough and continued even into the early 1930s.[26] As a result of this policy the position of the batraks, vis-a-vis the serednyaks, in the Komsomol was strengthened and the ideological inconsistencies regarding the social composition of the Komsomol were resolved.

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to recruit mature factory workers accounted for the low number of Komsomol members in the ranks of the 25 Thousanders movement. Viola, 46.

[25]Vel'mitskii, 37.

[26]N.I. Nemakov, Kommunisticheskaia partiia - organizator massovogo kolkhoznogo dvizheniia (1929-1932 gg.) (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo moskovskogo universiteta, 1966), 165.

This change in the social composition of the rural Komsomol cells was noticeable even as early as January 1930. Batraks and bednyaks now greatly outnumbered the middle peasants.[27] In order to prevent this latter group from joining with isolated kulak peasants to resist the Party collectively, Komsomol members were instructed to offer "ideologically reliable" middle peasants the opportunity to participate in Komsomol programs.[28] Given the chance to be in the Party's favour many serednyaks chose to cooperate with the Komsomol. This policy would have a dramatic effect on the later program to "liquidate the kulaks as a class".

With a reliable social class in control of the rural Komsomol cells the organization could take an active part in the collectivization campaign. The first step toward this goal was to instruct Komsomolites to join the collective farms and illustrate to the peasantry the "benefits" of collective labour. Since the establishment of collective farms was the most crucial element of the Party's rural industrialization program, Party political departments were given complete authority to supervise the transfer of Komsomol members into these structures.[29] The Party leadership apparently considered that they could not rely upon Komsomol members to fulfil these orders themselves.

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[27]Sherstobitov, Tom II, 147.

[28]V.P. Danilov ed., Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk, 1957), 211.

[29]S.P. Trapeznikov, Leninizm i agrarno-krest'ianskii vopros Tom II (Moscow: Mysl', 1967), 396.

By 1930, with many Komsomolites already transferred to collective farms, it became apparent that the territorial principle "seriously hampered organizational-political and educational work"[30] of Komsomol members. It was no longer possible for Komsomol cells to be organized around a group of villages, as most members and a growing number of peasants were located in collective farms. The shape of the countryside was changing so rapidly that in the summer of 1931 76 percent of all village Komsomolites were transferred into collective farms cells[31] and close to 60 percent of Soviet agriculture had been collectivized.[32] These changes mandated a change to the industrial principle.

Under the changed circumstances, the duties of the Komsomol were similarly changed. The various jobs demanded of Komsomol members were carefully outlined in a July 1931 Komsomol Central Committee document entitled "The Constructive Framework of Kolkhoz Cells".[33] This document divided Komsomol work into three sections: political education and cultural work among the masses; work for the preparation of cadres and the mastery of technology; and kolkhoz industrial work. Although the first two sections dealt with subjects similar to those in the previously analyzed 1924 document, their examination will clearly illustrate how the role of the Komsomol changed dramatically with the advent of collectiviz-

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[30]Sherstobitov, Tom I, 392.

[31]Sherstobitov, Tom II, 250.

[32]Ibid., 191.

[33]Minailov, 84-89.

ation.

In the first field the Komsomol was instructed to organize and lead political schools and circles as well as conduct political meetings and conversations in izba reading rooms, which were now relocated within the collective farms. Furthermore, Komsomolites were told to continue to fight illiteracy, to improve the health and lifestyle of the peasantry, and to foster a cultural revolution based on anti-religious propaganda. While all these measures were part of the Komsomol's work in the mid-1920s, the duties designated to the fields of political education and the improvement of rural life were subtly changed to reflect the altered political situation in the Soviet Union.

Komsomol members were now required to pass political exams, after which they would obtain a special stamp in their membership booklet, before they could be commissioned to perform propaganda work. Also, the secretary of the Komsomol cell was required to enroll periodically in night courses on political theory.[34] In all political courses traditional subjects such as the History of the Communist Party and Marxist-Leninist theory were taught to Komsomol members, as well as new courses on the inconsistencies in the political platforms of both the Left and Right Deviationists.[35] Komsomolites, who were equipped with their own personal literature on Communist doctrines, were thereafter instructed to pass their

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[34]Mitiaeva, 59.

[35]In 1929, on the orders of Stalin, Trotsky was exiled from the Soviet Union and Bukharin was expelled from the Politburo.

knowledge on to the peasants in the collective farms. By May 1931, in the resolution "On the work of Kolkhoz cells", the Party announced that the political activity of rural Komsomol cells had become acceptable.[36]

Improving the health and lifestyle of the peasantry had also changed since the mid-1920s. Under collectivization Komsomol members were instructed regularly to clean peasant households of mud, to dig and inspect wells, to establish a clinic, which would be staffed by a doctor, in each kolkhoz, and to erect dairy institutions to monitor the quality of dairy products.[37] By promoting these measures, as well as by encouraging peasants to wash their cloths more often and use a tooth brush and soap, the Komsomol was obviously trying to improve the health and living conditions of collective farm workers. While the worthiness of these tasks cannot be denied, the success of this program would ensure the state both healthy and productive workers.

Komsomol work designated to the field "preparation of cadres" was centred around the promotion of agrarian technology, especially through the SPY network.[38] Many of the educational tasks which the Komsomol performed in the 1920s, such as construction, harvesting, and maintenance, as well as the practical application of studies, were still part of the curriculum. With the advancement of

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[36]Mitaeva, 59.

[37]Ibid., 151.

[38]In 1929 the Schools for Peasant Youths were renamed the Schools for Kolkhoz Youths, of which there existed 1216. See Mel'nikov in Nikiforov, ed., vypusk chetyryi, 67.

collectivization and the mechanization of agriculture, however, the school network placed greater emphasis on the mastery of machine and chemical technology.[39]

The most drastic changes to Komsomol duties fell within the field of "kolkhoz industrial work". In this area the Komsomol was responsible for tightening labour discipline, ending absenteeism, raising the quantity and quality of work, and increasing the profits of collective farms. The apparent emphasis on transferring industrial discipline to the countryside served two purposes. It would firstly ensure the regulation of labour productivity on collective farms, and, secondly, would facilitate the control of the peasantry by the Party. Since urban Komsomol workers were the "organizers and leaders of the collective farms and the kolkhoz system in all its parts"[40] the successful implementation of industrial discipline was now felt to be guaranteed.

Regulation of kolkhoz work was further accomplished through the advancement of industrial planning, a program which coordinated all aspects of agriculture. The work assignments of collective farms, industrial brigades, tractors and agricultural machinery, rationalization and production groups, and agrarian technicians were all organized within the halls of the Soviet government.

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[39]The importance of the SPY network to the education of peasants in technical fields, and the significance which this would have on the success of collectivization are discussed in detail in the July 10, 1928, issue of Komsomol'skaia pravda.

[40]V.M. Selunskaia "Rabochie-dvadtsatipiatitysiachniki - provodniki politiki partii v kolkhoznom stroitel'stve (1929-1930 gody)," Voprosy istorii 3 (1954):21.

Komsomol members would consequently have to fulfil the production quotas of state planning commissioners in these agricultural fields. Two areas in which the Komsomol played a very significant role were agricultural udarnik brigades and Machine Tractor Stations (MTS). These latter stations, which were established in 1928 to house the agricultural machinery for a group of collective farms, became during the First Five-Year Plan an important bastion of control in the countryside.[41]

In September 1929 the Komsomol Central Committee outlined the role which Komsomol members were to play in tractor stations. The Central Committee instructed members to participate in the work of stations, to become educated in the maintenance and use of tractors, and to explain to the peasants that tractors and other machinery would free them from heavy labour.[42] In order to fulfil these tasks and occupy positions as technical specialists at tractor stations it was necessary for Komsomol members to study the latest industrial technology. To support the operation of tractor stations, Komsomolites organized subbotniki to raise money and buy tractors, they repaired tractors, and held contests, such as the "day of the tractor", to see who could best maintain agricultural machinery.[43] Other movements, such as the "iron" and "tractor

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[41]For a detailed account of the MTS, see Robert F. Miller, One Hundred Thousand Tractors (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970).

[42]Kolosov, 428-429.

[43]G. Bogatikova, "Leninskii Komsomol - Aktivnyi pomoshchnik kommunisticheskoi partii v sozdanii MTS v gody pervoi piatiletki," in Yu. Lopusov ed., Pozyvnye istorii vypusk vtoroi (Moscow:

cavalry" and MTS udarnik brigades, were regularly organized by Komsomol members in order to promote high production levels at stations. The Party hoped that the diligence of Komsomol members would play a valuable role in raising the MTS network's ability to control the countryside, a crucial component of the collectivization campaign.[44]

An increase in agricultural production was also the primary duty of rural udarnik brigades, which operated under principles similar to those of factory brigades. Udarnik workers regularly attempted to raise the production quota of collective farms through the establishment of ten day work drives, and agitated for an early harvest and for the complete collectivization of agriculture. Although the work of udarnik brigades was not particularly significant, the brigades are a good illustration of the Party's determination to apply urban experiences to the countryside.

Udarnik brigades were also influential in promoting socialist competitions throughout the collective farm network. Competitions would be conducted between individual agricultural labourers, different collective farms and regions and, with the steady infusion of workers to the countryside, between urban industries

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Molodaia Gvardiia, 1970), 136.

[44]The role of the MTS in the political control of the countryside is discussed by David Marples in Stalinism in Ukraine in the 1940s (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1992), 139-143. Naum Jasny, in chapter 12 of Socialized Agriculture, discusses how the MTS's supervision of agricultural machinery contributed to the Party's control of the peasantry.

and collective farms.[45] Since one of the principal drawbacks to collective labour was its impediment to personal incentive, competitions were deemed crucial to raise the productivity of workers. Consequently, Komsomol "red ploughmen" participated in competitions such as "the holiday of the first furrow", "the all-union drive for the harvest", and "the month of the plough"[46], the winners of which would receive prizes and special treatment from Komsomol and Party authorities.

Another very important agricultural competition, the "Day of Harvest and of Collectivization", was organized by the Party for October 14, 1929. The goals of this campaign were "to realize agrarian minimums and to widen the fields of cultivation through collectivization."[47] By linking the success of agricultural harvests to the collectivization campaign the Party hoped to show to the peasants that collectivization would result in their prosperity. This would be a simple method of attracting uncommitted peasants into the collective farms. The Party appeared satisfied with the results of the campaign. One year after the founding of this day, on October 6, 1930, the Party Central Committee indicated that the campaign succeeded in strengthening ties between city and kolkhoz workers, in uniting the batrak and bednyak peasants, and in furthering the program of "liquidating the

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[45]S.S. Ivashkin, "Rol' rabochego klassa v osushchestvlenii massovoi kollektivizatsii sel'skogo khoziaistva povolzh'ia," Istoria SSSR 4 (1981):114.

[46]Kamshalov, 501.

[47]Danilov, 195.

kulak as a class", all of which were important elements in the collectivization campaign.[48]

The attack on alleged kulaks was an extremely important element in the Party's plan to secure complete control over the nation's agricultural resources and force the social transformation of the countryside.[49] This thorough and brutal attack would both cleanse the countryside of a perceived ideological enemy and would directly aid the growth of collective farms.

> All industrial means, livestock, agricultural machines and inventory, social and personal products, industrial and trade undertakings, industrial and family supplies, and monetary savings, which had been taken away from the kulaks, were placed in the indivisible fund of the collective farms.[50]

Working very closely with Party organs, Komsomolites went into the villages to find concealed grain, watched roads upon which grain was transported in "red wagon trains", guarded grain elevators, and ensured that kulaks paid all of their taxes completely and on time.

The Komsomol was further instructed by the Party to coordinate the efforts of working brigades from the cities and very poor peasant youths, two groups which Party propagandists considered antagonistic towards the kulaks, for the fulfilment of the dekulakization campaign. Their participation, however, was

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[48]Ibid., 322-323.

[49]For an authoritative description of this campaign from Soviet sources see Fainsod, Smolensk, 242-251.

[50]P.N. Sharova, "Sploshnaia kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva - reshaiushii etap likvidatsii protivopolozhnosti mezhdu gorodom i derevnei," Voprosy istorii 10 (1953):6. For an analysis of the sweeping confiscation of kulak resources in Russia and the Ukraine see Sherstobitov, Tom II, 217-218.

contingent upon the acquisition of monetary and other benefits, which allowed them to be easily manipulated by skilled Komsomol agitators.[51] Since the Party was only interested in obtaining grain quotas and enforcing collectivization, it did not question how Komsomol members fulfilled their duties. The Komsomol Central Committee therefore instructed all Komsomol members to proceed with dekulakization and grain requisitioning through any means possible.[52]

The terror and efficiency of the dekulakization campaign would result in the Party gaining complete control over the people and resources of the countryside. The ideological enemy created during NEP had been attacked and the remaining peasants were transformed into industrial workers. With the help of the Komsomol the Party's plans to transform the USSR both economically and socially through collectivization became a reality. This, however, could not have been accomplished without a dramatic social transformation of the Komsomol itself. Only when rural Komsomol cells were saturated with urban workers and centralized in collective farms was the Party satisfied with their performance. Consequently, it appears that the drastic measures of the collectivization campaign were necessary if the Party wanted to subjugate

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[51]The pages of Komsomol'skaia pravda are replete with information on the success of the grain requisitioning and dekulakization campaigns. The April 12 and 18, 1928, and January 7, 1930 issues offer good examples of Party propaganda in both areas.

[52]Yu.A. Moshkov, Zernovaia problema v gody sploshnoi kollektivizatsii sel'skogo khoziaistva SSSR (1929-1932 gg.) (Moscow: izdatel'stvo moskovskogo universiteta, 1966), 150.

the countryside.

Conclusion

The establishment of the Komsomol in 1918 allowed the Bolsheviks to channel the revolutionary enthusiasm of Russia's youths into activities which would support the cause of their party. Some of the League's early leadership dearly wanted the organization to be independent of the Party, but their voices were gradually silenced and the Komsomol became entirely subordinated to the Bolsheviks.[53] Despite Party control over the organization, and the fact that the Komsomol leadership proclaimed their organization to be the "faithful assistant" and "reserve" of the Party, attempts were still made to maintain the charade of independence. This image, which was meant to conceal the nature of Soviet totalitarianism from foreign audiences, has inspired Soviet propagandists to claim that the country's youths unequivocally supported the Bolsheviks and that the Party, like an older brother, offered guidance to the young during periods of despair.[54]

Support for the Party was always the principal concern of the Komsomol, even if this meant neglecting the welfare of its membership. During the Civil War the Komsomol stringently enforced orders which forced members to participate in the fight on the side of the Bolsheviks regardless of the fact that not all members

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[53]Fisher, 76-77.

[54]See chapters 11 and 12 in Fainsod's How Russia is Ruled for an explanation of how this image, which fooled many Westerners in the 1930s, was perpetuated through the Soviet constitution and governmental elections.

desired to enter the ranks of the military. This same blind devotion to the Party was required during the period of rapid industrialization when the Komsomol Central Committee sanctioned the dispatch of its members to remote areas of the Soviet Union to construct factories under abhorrent conditions. The most visible example of the Komsomol's subordination to the Party came during preparations for the complete collectivization of agriculture. When it became apparent that rural Komsomolites were negligent in their anti-religious work and did not cooperate with village Party cells the Komsomol Central Committee sanctioned the purge of its rural membership. The claim that the League would defend the interest of youths was a fiction from the moment the declaration was adopted at the First Komsomol Congress in 1918.

Once the dissenting voices of opposition parties had been removed from the Komsomol Central Committee in 1918, the Bolsheviks were guaranteed control over the League's membership and could use it to further its consolidation of power. One of the principal methods of achieving this goal was propaganda. The endeavours of Komsomol enthusiasts during the Civil War to foster patriotism and revolutionary élan, the promotion of socialist competitions and udarnik brigades to raise the industrial output in factories, and the preaching of communist doctrines and Party statutes in the countryside were all examples of this tactic. This approach, especially in the countryside, did not always produce the desired results. While this was in part due to insufficient efforts on the part of Komsomol members, it was more often due to an unreceptive

and hostile audience.

When efforts to convince the population had failed the Party resorted to more coercive methods to obtain obedience. For these methods to work it was first necessary to ensure that the ideological zealots within the League were firmly in control of the operations. This technique was particularly apparent in two incidents. Firstly, when protests against the Bolsheviks arose from the Kronstadt sailors, trusted Komsomol enthusiasts brutally ended the uprising.[55] Secondly, following the purge of rural Komsomol cells, League members enthusiastically participated in the dekulakization campaign. They forced peasants to pay exorbitant taxes, requisitioned grain, and organized entire families for deportation in what became one of the most merciless attacks on the peasantry by the state.[56] These two grisly episodes convinced the Soviet regime that coercion was much more efficient than attempts to persuade the population.

The induction of large numbers of youths into the Komsomol was seen as another way to promote Party control over society. Although the League was originally composed mostly of urban youths, during the Civil War the ranks of the Komsomol were gradually filled with peasants, most of whom were ignorant of Party doc-

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[55]For a further description of the events at Kronstadt see George von Rauch, A History of Soviet Russia (London: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957), 126-128.

[56]Robert Conquest gives a detailed account of the feelings of those who were for and against dekulakization. See The Harvest of Sorrow, 129-130.

trines.[57] In spite of the fact that the mass nature of the organization may have compromised its militancy, the League's Central Committee could control careerists and opportunists by requiring them to participate in Komsomol activities. Also, as the number of youths who had received basic political indoctrination rose, so would the number of those who conformed to the demands of the Party.

Because of the importance of political indoctrination in creating firm supporters of the Bolsheviks, a substantial portion of the Komsomol's role was devoted to spreading propaganda. The nine point program outlined at the First Komsomol Congress described the necessity of publishing papers, journals, and brochures, and promoting reading rooms and clubs. This work was accomplished in military units, in industrial factories, and in villages and collective farms. While the primary purpose of this propaganda campaign was to cultivate support for the Bolsheviks by indoctrinating the populace, it would also function as a means of imprinting these political slogans into the minds of League members. If repeated frequently enough, Komsomol members might eventually accept the political propaganda which they were instructed to preach.

Soviet propaganda stressed the destruction of class enemies and the storming of industrial and technical barriers. These militaristic connotations were important for recreating the atmosphere of the Civil War, a time when dedication and hardships

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[57]Fisher, 63.

were expected of the people. If similar revolutionary feelings could be nurtured in Komsomol members, then it would be possible for them to justify sacrificing their time and energies for the Party. Attempts to create a "siege mentality" were apparent during the industrialization and collectivization campaigns, when the Soviet press continually reported that the country was being attacked by wreckers, Western spies, kulaks, and class enemies.[58] The desired result was the intensification of labour on the part of Komsomol members and the strengthening of their loyalty to the state and the Party.

The efforts by the Party to control society reveals the distrust which the Bolsheviks felt towards the people they claimed to represent. While this mistrust was also applied to Komsomolites, it was not applied equally to all members. Before work was apportioned to Komsomol members their social background was carefully scrutinized by Party functionaries who were of the belief that only the working class truly supported the Bolsheviks. Komsomol work was subsequently divided in conformity with this principle. The antipathy which the Bolsheviks held towards other social classes became evident when, under the auspices of correcting insufficiencies in their work, the Party purged the rural Komsomol cells prior to the collectivization campaign. In spite of the fact that urban Komsomol workers were equally negligent in their duties during the industrialization campaign, especially in

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[58]For information on the rhetoric surrounding the "Shakhty" trial of suspected bourgeois specialists and the enthusiasm which the affair generated in youths, see Filtzer, 68-69.

udarnik brigades, the Party still gave them unqualified support.

Since it is doubtful that the Party would have entrusted the important tasks of implementing the dekulakization and collectivization campaigns to workers of questionable loyalty, the Komsomol members who were sent to work in the villages were more than likely to be true enthusiasts. If this was the case, then support for the Party among Komsomolites was generally an urban, not rural, phenomenon. Such a cleavage in membership would be the predictable result both of Bolshevik antipathy towards the peasantry and the peasants' traditional mistrust of the city.[59]

Raising the educational levels of youths in both the city and the village would greatly contribute to ending this division by spreading support for the Bolsheviks throughout the country. In the military, factory, and countryside, the acquisition of industrial technology was feverishly promoted by the Komsomol. As all these programs progressed, the students would gradually become accustomed to the modern urban environment. Since it was in this environment where Bolshevik propaganda flourished, the industrialization of the Soviet Union would also facilitate the expansion of the Bolsheviks' power base. This dynamic was professed by Lenin, who preached that widespread education would promote the creation of a communist society.[60]

To this end, the Komsomol was further instructed to support the goals of the First Five Year Plan, which emphasized the mastery

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[59]Conquest, 20.

[60]Ignat'eva, 53.

of industrial technology and the strengthening of labour discipline. FZU and other industrial schools were created to supply Soviet factories with qualified and regimented workers who could work efficiently in the new industrial enterprises. Industrial discipline was also instilled in peasants through the SPY educational network. Learning about agricultural machinery and new agricultural techniques, peasants would be prepared for factory-style labour of the collective farms and MTS, the bastions of Party control in the countryside.

While it is impossible to ascertain reliably the Party's ability to instill loyalty in Komsomol members through these various techniques, a task which would necessitate interviewing individual Komsomol members, it is possible to comment on the nature of Soviet propaganda and Soviet totalitarianism. Firstly, while it is clear that the many Komsomol members supported the Party during the Civil War and the First Five Year Plan, the abundant evidence depicting the laziness of many members and their lack of discipline indicates that Soviet propaganda was ineffective. Unable to guarantee immediate change and concrete economic benefits, the Party had to rely on promises of a bright, yet distant, future. The staleness of Soviet slogans made these promises transparent and, instead of furthering their goal, helped to dispel the enthusiasm of Komsomol members.

Secondly, this failure would force the Party to resort to further repression if it wished to retain control over society. The continual use of coercion further illustrates that unless the

Party changed its methods it would eventually alienate more youths than it would be able to win over. Such a position would be undesirable since the instruments of repression could not be maintained indefinitely, and their eventual removal would result in the demise of the Party.

Finally, although the Party definitely failed in making all Komsomol members responsible and disciplined members, the Party did achieve its goal of using the Komsomol to promote social and political change in the country. The establishment of the Bolshevik dictatorship, the industrialization of the country, the education of the population, the transformation of the peasantry into wage-labourers, and their relocation into collective farms were all events in which the Komsomol participated. The subsequent imprint which these members made on Soviet society, and on the world as a whole, is remarkable for its depth and longevity.

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